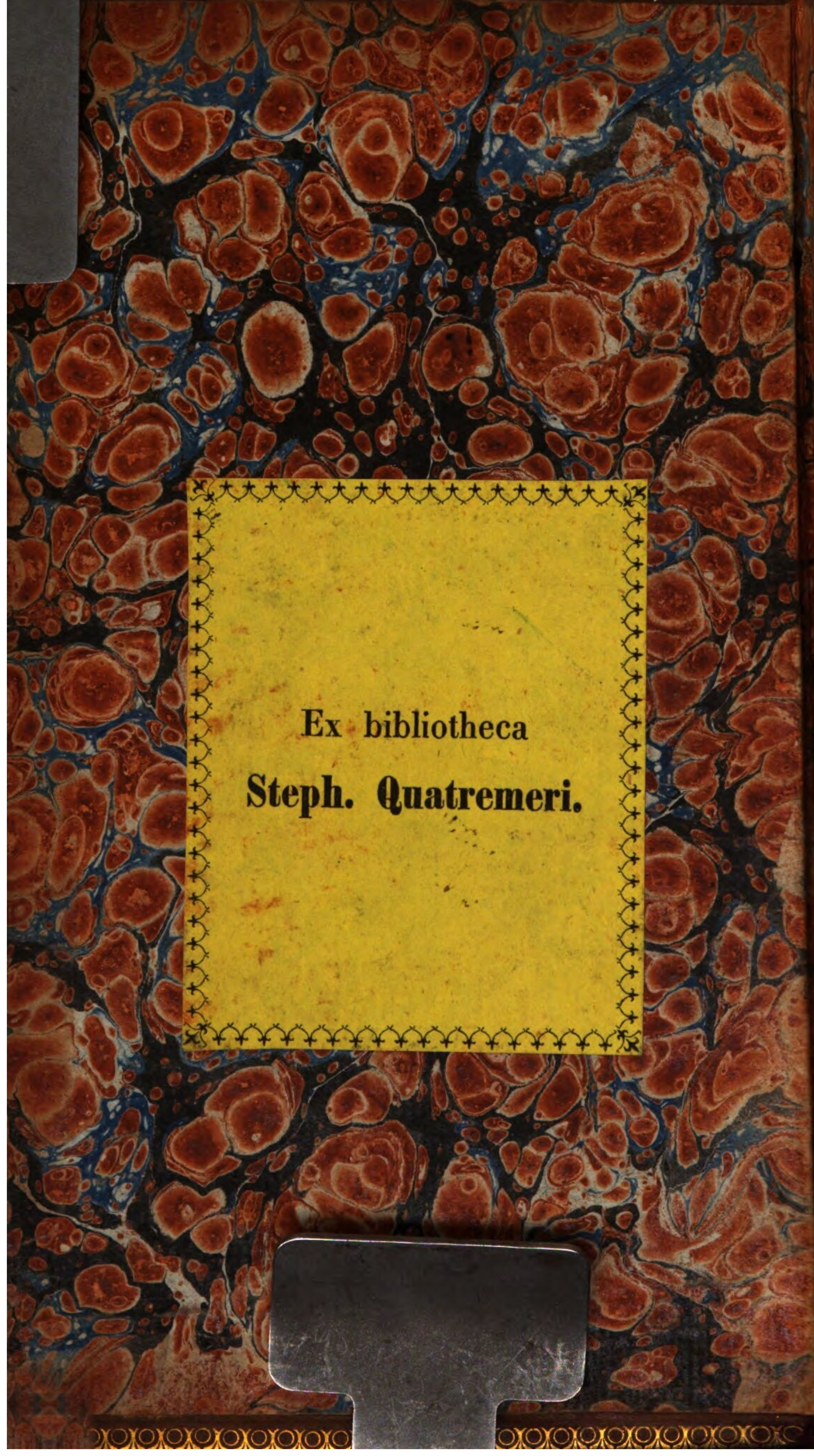


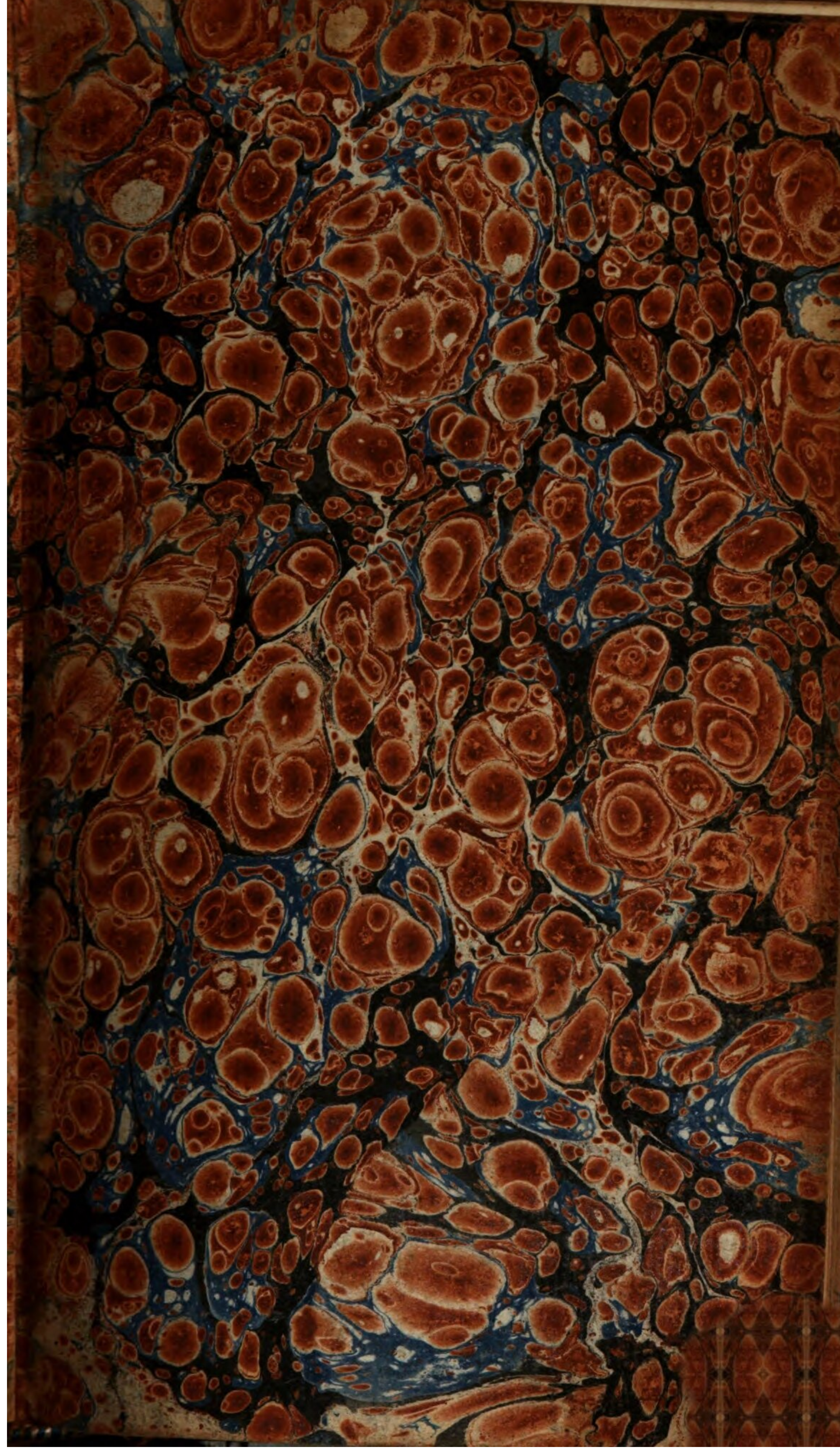
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The image shows the front cover of an old book. The cover is decorated with a marbled paper pattern featuring large, irregular, reddish-brown spots on a dark blue background. A rectangular yellow paper label is pasted in the center of the cover. The label has a decorative border of small, repeating black star-like motifs. On the label, the text "Ex bibliotheca" is printed in a small, black, serif font, and "Steph. Quatreméri." is printed below it in a larger, bold, black, serif font. A metal clip is visible at the bottom of the image, holding the book open.

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LORD BYRON'S WORKS.

I.

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LORD BYRON'S WORKS.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

CONTAINING :

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS — THE CORSAIR — LARA —
PARISINA — etc.

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BIBLIOTHECA

REGIA

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MEMOIR

OF THE

RIGHT HONORABLE LORD BYRON.

THE family of Byron is very ancient, and has attached its name to the most illustrious periods of our History. The fields of Cressy and Azincourt witnessed their heroism, and were bedewed with their blood ; and long anterior to these periods they had marched in triumph over those plains, which their not less illustrious descendant has since delighted to tread, in defence of the religion of their forefathers, under the Lion-Hearted Richard, whose glory and whose sufferings they shared.

The present noble Lord, in his « *Adieu to Newstead Abbey,* » appears to have been in possession of historical facts relative to his ancestors, which are unknown to genealogists ; we are far from supposing them as the fiction of the poet, but at the same time we consider it a duty, that the noble Lord owes to his ancestors and himself, to give those genealogical facts not only the importance, but the form, of history.

The family of Byron came from Normandy with William the Conqueror, who rewarded it with large possessions in the counties of York and Lancaster. Our limits compel us to « leap

*

over the lapse of ages, » in order to arrive more speedily at the illustrious subject of this memoir, making merely, *en passant*, a few observations upon his Ancestry.

In 1540, Sir John Byron, Knight, received a grant of the Priory of Newstead and several manors depending on it; this place has ever since remained the family seat of the Byron family, until its recent sale by the present Lord.

In the unfortunate wars, during the reign of Charles I, the family of Byron displayed a rare adherence to the falling fortunes of their sovereign, four of them sealing that fidelity with their blood, at the battle of Marston Moor. There were eight brothers, John, the eldest of whom, was, as a small testimonial of the gratitude of the House of Stuart to the family of Byron, elevated to the Peerage in 1643, under the name and title of Baron Byron, of Rochdale, in the county of Lancaster.

The father of the present lord married for his second wife, Catherine Gordon, (who was lineally descended from the earl of Huntley and Jane, daughter of James II, King of Scotland,) by whom he had issue the present or 6th Lord, who was born 22d January 1788, and succeeded to the title and estates on the demise of his great uncle, 19th May 1798.

It is a trite adage, that the life of an author is to be found in his works; this peculiarly applies to Lord Byron. His youth was, it is true, distinguished by a remarkable precocity

of talent, but there were evident symptoms of a germ of melancholy and abstraction, which, as one of his school-fellows once observed to us, threatened to « grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength, » till it settled with age into a moroseness of temper, which says « Man delights not me, nor woman either ; » unfortunately a fatal event has since served to develope that principle, which the learning, philanthropy, and good breeding of his Lordship had hitherto triumphed over.

His Lordship received the first rudiments of education at the celebrated seminary of Harrow, from whence he was subsequently removed to Cambridge, where his early turn for poetical composition, and the desire to know what the mighty dead had done in various ages and in various tongues, inspired his Lordship with a classical taste and a desire for the study of modern languages ; and though critics may not deem him a profound, the severest will allow him to be an elegant, scholar.

At the age of twenty, his Lordship essayed his unfledged pinions in a volume of *Juvenile Poems*, which, without being excellent, gave an earnest of excellence, too subtile indeed to be felt or appreciated by the frigid sensorium of a northern critic, who attacked these light productions with a virulence and malignity, of which even the warmest admirers of the Edinburgh Review have been ashamed. As a criticism, it was undeserving of notice, but ac-

according to their leading principle, the Edinburgh Reviewers merely took the work as a text on which to expatiate, and to serve as a medium for developing their own particular opinions ; Lord Byron found his critics travelling out of the record, to heap upon him gratuitous insults ; and he replied in a satirical poem under the title of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. His adversaries had made use of the tomahawk to destroy the poet, whose counter attack displayed the keenness of the small sword, a gentlemanly weapon which the vulgar critics knew not how to wield. The wounds were mortal ; the triumph of genius over the « wordcatchers who lived on syllables » was complete ; and since that period the northern critics « surly and proud » have not dared to spit their venom at our noble author.

From these proofs of his Lordship's talents, the public looked with anxious solicitude to his majority, hoping to see him a shining member of the senate. In this they were disappointed ; his Lordship showed no relish for the jarring elements of debate, where truth and patriotism are so often sacrificed to the predetermination of party ; and where talent is so often prostituted merely to secure the triumph of faction. These scenes could have but little relish for the man, whose pen was guided by the inspiration of his soul. His mind was strongly marked by the sentiment of the poet whom he has sometimes imitated and occasionally sur-

passed, and who has a couplet to this purport :

My soul detests him as the gates of Hell,
Who one thing thinks, and will another tell.

Consequently the house of Peers did not present any charms to his Lordship, who, soon after attaining his majority, set out on his travels. He visited Spain and Portugal ; and from thence proceeded to the classic shores of Greece, where every step awoke the vivid recollections of a highly cultivated and poetic mind. In his lone musings he retraced the scenes which the Father of verse describes with a fidelity that is easily perceptible even after the lapse of ages, and the great moral and physical revolutions which Greece has undergone. His soul burned to partake in the scenes which had fired his youthful brain, and which the localities recalled at every moment.—But one part only was left him for imitation ; Musæus had related in glowing strains the loves of Hero and Leander, and our poet, a modern Leander, resolved, like his prototype, to swim across the Hellespont from Abydos to Sestos, which he effected ; alas ! no Hero was there to light him to her bower ; but the imagination of the poet supplied the deficiency.

It was in Greece that his Lordship, as we understand, formed the plan of his principal poems, and where he wrote a part of that which fixed his fame as one of the first original poets of the age : after nearly three years absence, our noble Author returned to his native

land, and gave to the public *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a romaunt. Walter Scott had at that moment attained the supremacy of poetic talent, and the affected nursery versification of Wordsworth, with the wild pretended imitations of the ancients, by Southey, had found admirers, the one for its trite simplicity, and the other for its undoubted claim to worship, as being unlike any thing « in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. » The appearance of *Childe Harold* made Walter Scott tremble on his throne ; he saw the sceptre ready to pass from his hands into those of his noble rival ; while the ephemeral brood of poetasters felt the presence of the master, and slunk into their native insignificance. For many years the versifiers, scribbling *invitâ Minervâ*, had felt the impossibility of writing any thing like a regular poem by classical rules ; many of them even were so ignorant, that they were not aware of the existence of any, and the others affected to disdain what they could not reach. Lord Byron himself became slightly tinged with the infection, and he sometimes forgot his Horace, to follow those whom he was born to surpass. But, upon the whole, *Childe Harold* displayed such unequivocal proofs of true poetic genius and a highly cultivated mind ; it so far surpassed all recent attempts of the same nature, that the literary part of the public willingly pardoned a few eccentricities, and the world in general hailed

it with a rapture which would not suffer the mutterings of criticism to be heard. Every succeeding literary effusion of his Lordship has met with increased applause.

The Giaour, the Bride of Abydos, the Corsair, Lara, Hebrew Melodies, Manfred, etc., followed *Childe Harold* in rapid succession, and disclosed the vast poetical powers of his Lordship. Where all is excellent, it is difficult to distinguish; each poem has its peculiar merit, but perhaps *the Corsair* is more thoroughly imbued with the mental character of its author than any other; none ever yet read it without feeling regret at its abrupt conclusion. Some superficial readers have expressed surprise at the success of some of his poems, because the characters are often far from amiable. Had these persons been able to descend into their own hearts, and analyse their own feelings, their wonder would have ceased. Our noble author generally draws from nature, and his descriptions touch a sympathetic cord in the human heart, which vibrates « we know not why, and care not wherefore. » Lord Byron is essentially a natural poet, and he writes only in the moments of inspiration; this gives him an incalculable advantage over those, whom the *auri sacra fames* goad on to write, no matter how, so that they can fill a volume and put a few thousands in their pockets. Lord Byron is animated by a nobler principle; he makes a present of his works to his friends, a mode of

acting which alone must inspire more elevated poetic sentiment than the mere object of pecuniary gain. Lord Byron having established his fame on a solid basis, all ranks of his readers felt happy in his union with the amiable daughter of Sir Ralph Milbank, Bart., the heiress of the fortune and honours of the noble House of Wentworth, to which she has succeeded since the birth of their daughter and melancholy separation from her Lord; being now in her own right Viscountess Wentworth. On that melancholy event the biographer cannot do better than imitate the example set by the parties themselves: not a breath of accusation is heard on either side; the dignified virtue of Lady Byron not permitting her even to notice the affecting lines of his Lordship, which never fail to draw the tear of sensibility. Since that fatal period his Lordship has become a voluntary exile from the land of his forefathers; but he has not been forsaken by the Muse, as the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* prove, he can still boast of her happiest inspiration, which, at the same time that it lightens the gloom of the heart-broken exile, gives him still more exalted claims to the admiration and sympathy of those whose approbation can never be indifferent to an honourable mind.

THE
BRIDE OF ABYDOS.
A TURKISH TALE.

IS INSCRIBED, WITH
THE SENTIMENT OF REGARD
Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken hearted.

AND SINCERE FRIEND,
BURNS.

BYRON.

BRIDGE OF A RDOS.

On that
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fall under the name of tragedy. Since that fatal period his Lordship has become a voluntary exile from the land of his birth; but he has not been able to leave the stage, as the third and fourth causes of *tragedy*. *Tragedy* prove, he can still trust to his great inspiration, which, as we have seen, that it lightens the gloom of the heart-laden exile, gives him still more exalted claims to the admiration and sympathy of those whose approbation can never be indifferent to an honourable mind.

THE
BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD HOLLAND,

THIS TALE

IS INSCRIBED, WITH

EVERY SENTIMENT OF REGARD

AND RESPECT,

BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED

AND SINCERE FRIEND,

BYRON.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD ROLAND,
THIS TALE
IS PRESENTED, WITH
EVERY SENTIMENT OF REGARD
AND RESPECT,
BY HIS GRACIOUS OFFICER
AND SINGING FRIEND,
BYRON.

8

THE
BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

CANTO I.

I.

KNOW ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of gul¹ in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of Ocean is deepest in die;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the land of the Sun—
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?²
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

II.

Begirt with many a gallant slave,
Apparelled as becomes the brave,

Awaiting each his Lord's behest
 To guide his steps, or guard his rest,
 Old Giaffir sate in his Divan :

Deep thought was in his aged eye ;
 And though the face of Mussulman,
 Not oft betrays to standers by
 The mind within, well skilled to hide
 All but unconquerable pride,
 His pensive cheek and pondering brow
 Did more than he was wont avow.

III.

“Let the chamber be cleared.”—The train disappeared—

Now call me the chief of the Haram guard.”

With Giaffir is none but his only son,

And the Nubian awaiting the sire's award.

“Haroun—when all the crowd that wait

“Are passed beyond the outer gate,

“ (Woe to the head whose eye beheld

“ My child Zuleika's face unveiled !)

“ Hence, lead my daughter from the tower ;

“ Her fate is fixed this very hour :

“ Yet not to her repeat my thought ;

“ By me alone be duty taught !”

“ Pacha ! to hear is to obey. ”

No more must slave to despot say—

Then to the tower had ta'en his way,

But here young Selim silence brake,

First lowly rendering reverence meet ;

And downcast looked, and gently spake,

Still standing at the Pacha's feet :

For son of Moslem must expire,

Ere dare to sit before his sire !

« Father ! for fear that thou should'st chide
 « My sister, or her sable guide,
 « Know, for the fault, if fault there be,
 « Was mine, then fall thy frowns on me ;
 « So lovelily the morning shone,
 « That—let the old and weary sleep—
 « I could not ; and to view alone
 « The fairest scenes of land and deep,
 « With none to listen and reply
 « To thoughts with which my heart beat high
 « Were irksome—for whate'er my mood,
 « In sooth I love not solitude ;
 « I on Zuleika's slumber broke,
 « And, as thou knowest that for me
 « Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
 « Before the guardian slaves awoke
 « We to the cypress groves had flown,
 « And made earth, main, and heaven our own !
 « There lingered we, beguiled too long
 « With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song ;³
 « Till I, who heard the deep tambour⁴
 « Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,
 « To thee and to my duty true,
 « Warned by the sound, to greet thee flew :
 « But there Zuleika wanders yet—
 « Nay, father, rage not—nor forget
 « That none can pierce that secret bower
 « But those who watch the women's tower.»

IV.

« Son of a slave »—the Pacha said—
 « From unbelieving mother bred,
 « Vain were a father's hope to see
 « Aught that beseems a man in thee.

« Thou, when thine arm should bend the bow,
 « And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
 « Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,
 « Must pore where babbling waters flow,
 « And watch unfolding roses blow.
 « Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
 « Thy listless eyes so much admire,
 « Would lend thee something of his fire !
 « Thou, who wouldst see this battlement
 « By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;
 « Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
 « Before the dogs of Moscow fall,
 « Nor strike one stroke for life and death
 « Against the curs of Nazareth !
 « Go—let thy less than woman's hand
 « Assume the distaff—not the brand.
 « But, Haroun!—to my daughter speed :
 « And hark—of thine own head take heed—
 « If thus Zuleika oft takes wing—
 « Thou see'st yon bow—it hath a string ! »

V.

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,
 At least that met old Giaffir's ear,
 But every frown and every word
 Pierced keener than a Christian's sword.
 « Son of a slave!—reproached with fear !
 « Those gibes had cost another dear.
 « Son of a slave!—and *who* my sire ? »
 Thus held his thoughts their dark career,
 And glances ev'n of more than ire
 Flash forth, then faintly disappear.
 Old Giaffir gazed upon his son

And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;
He saw rebellion there begun:

« Come hither, boy—what, no reply?
« I mark thee—and I know thee too;
« But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
« But if thy beard had manlier length,
« And if thy hand had skill and strength,
« I'd joy to see thee break a lance,
« Albeit against my own perchance. »

As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:

That eye returned him glance for glance,
And proudly to his sire's was raised,

Till Giaffir's quailed and shrunk askance—
And why—he felt, but durst not tell.

« Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
« Will one day work me more annoy:
« I never loved him from his birth,
« And—but his arm is little worth,
« And scarcely in the chase could cope
« With timid fawn or antelope,
« Far less would venture into strife
« Where man contends for fame and life—
« I would not trust that look or tone:
« No—nor the blood so near my own.
« That blood—he hath not heard—no more—
« I'll watch him closer than before.
« He is an Arab⁵ to my sight,
« Or Christian crouching in the fight—
« But hark!—I hear Zuleika's voice;
« Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear!
« She is the offspring of my choice;
« O! more than ev'n her mother dear,

« With all to hope, and nought to fear—
 « My Peri! ever welcome here!
 « Sweet as the desert-fountain's wave
 « To lips just cooled in time to save—
 « Such to my longing sight art thou;
 « Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
 « More thanks for life, than I for thine
 « Who blest thy birth, and bless thee now.»

VI.

Fair, as the first that fell of womankind,
 When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
 Whose image then was stamped upon her mind—
 But once beguiled—and ever more beguiling;
 Dazzling, as that, oh! too transcendant vision
 To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given,
 When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian,
 And paints the lost on Earth revived in Heaven;
 Soft, as the memory of buried love;
 Pure, as the prayer which Childhood wafts above;
 Was she—the daughter of that rude old Chief,
 Who met the maid with tears—but not of grief,
 Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
 To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?
 Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
 Faints into dimness with its own delight,
 His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
 The might—the majesty of Loveliness?
 Such was Zuleika—such around her shone
 The nameless charms unmarked by her alone;
 The light of love, the purity of grace,
 The mind, the music breathing from her face,⁶

The heart whose softness harmonized the whole—
And, oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;
At one kind word those arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child caressing and carest,
Zuleika came—and Giaffir felt
His purpose half within him melt :
Not that against her fancied weal
His heart though stern could ever feel ;
Affection chained her to that heart ;
Ambition tore the links apart.

VII.

« Zuleika ! child of gentleness !

« How dear this very day must tell,

« When I forget my own distress,

« In losing what I love so well,

« To bid thee with another dwell :

« Another ! and a braver man

« Was never seen in battle's van.

« We Moslem reck not much of blood ;

« But yet the line of Carasman ?

« Unchanged, unchangeable hath stood

« First of the bold Timariot hands

« That won and well can keep their lands

« Enough that he who comes to woo

« Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou :

« His years need scarce a thought employ ;

« I would not have thee wed a boy.

« And thou shalt have a noble dower :

« And his and my united power

« Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
 « Which others tremble but to scan,
 « And teach the messenger⁸ what fate
 « The bearer of such boon may wait.
 « And now thou know'st thy father's will;
 « All that thy sex hath need to know:
 « 'Twas mine to teach obedience still—
 « The way to love, thy lord may show. »

VIII.

In silence bowed the virgin's head;
 And if her eye was filled with tears
 That stifled feeling dare not shed,
 And changed her cheek from pale to red,
 And red to pale, as through her ears
 Those winged words like arrows sped,
 What could such be but maiden fears?
 So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
 Love half regrets to kiss it dry;
 So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
 Even Pity scarce can wish it less!
 Whate'er it was the sire forgot;
 Or, if remembered, marked it not;
 Thrice clapped his hands, and called his steed,⁹
 Resigned his gem-adorned Chibouque,¹⁰
 And mounting fealty for the mead,
 With Maugrabee¹¹ and Mamaluke
 His way amid his Delis took,¹²
 To witness many an active deed
 With sabre keen, or blunt jereed.
 The Kislär only and his Moors
 Watch well the Haram's massy doors.

IX.

His head was leant upon his hand,
 His eye looked o'er the dark blue water
 That swiftly glides and gently swells
 Between the winding Dardanelles ;
 But yet he saw nor sea nor strand,
 Nor even his Pacha's turbaned band

Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
 Careering cleave the folded felt¹³
 With sabre stroke right sharply dealt ;
 Nor marked the javelin-darting crowd,
 Nor heard their Ollahs¹⁴ wild and loud—

He thought but of old Giaffir's daughter !

X.

No word from Selim's bosom broke ;
 One sigh Zuleika's thought bespoke :
 Still gazed he through the lattice grate,
 Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate.
 To him Zuleika's eye was turned,
 But little from his aspect learned :
 Equal her grief, yet not the same ;
 Her heart confessed a gentler flame :
 But yet that heart alarmed or weak,
 She knew not why, forbade to speak.
 Yet speak she must—but when essay ?

“ How strange he thus should turn away ! ”

“ Not thus we e'er before have met ; ”

“ Nor thus shall be our parting yet. ”

Thrice paced she slowly through the room,

And watched his eye—it still was fixed :

She snatched the urn wherein was mixed

The Persian Atar-gul's¹⁵ perfume,

And sprinkled all its odours o'er
 The pictured roof¹⁶ and marble floor:
 The drops, that through his glittering vest
 The playful girl's appeal addrest,
 Unheeded o'er his bosom flew,
 As if that breast were marble too.

« What sullen yet? it must not be—

« O! gentle Selim, this from thee! »

She saw in curious order set

The fairest flowers of Eastern land—

« He loved them once; may touch them yet,

« If offered by Zuleika's hand. »

The childish thought was hardly breathed
 Before the rose was plucked and wreathed;
 The next fond moment saw her seat

Her fairy form at Selim's feet:

« This rose to calm my brother's cares

« A message from the Bulbul¹⁷ bears;

« It says to-night he will prolong

« For Selim's ear his sweetest song;

« And though his note is somewhat sad,

« He'll try for once a strain more glad,

« With some faint hope his altered lay

« May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI.

« What! not receive my foolish flower?

« Nay then I am indeed unblest:

« On me can thus thy forehead lower?

« And know'st thou not who loves thee best?

« Oh, Selim dear! Oh, more than dearest!

« Say, is it me thou hat'st or fearest?

« Come, lay thy head upon my breast,

« And I will kiss thee into rest,

" Since words of mine, and songs must fail,
 " Even from my fabled nightingale.
 " I knew our sire at times was stern,
 " But this from thee had yet to learn :
 " Too well I know he loves thee not ;
 " But is Zuleika's love forgot ?
 " Ah ! deem I right ? the Pacha's plan—
 " This kinsman Bey of Carasman
 " Perhaps may prove some foe of thine.
 " If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine,
 " If shrines that ne'er approach allow
 " To woman's step admit her vow,
 " Without thy free consent, command,
 " The Sultan should not have my hand !
 " Think'st thou that I could bear to part
 " With thee, and learn to halve my heart ?
 " Ah ! were I severed from thy side,
 " Where were thy friend—and who my guide ?
 " Years have not seen, Time shall not see
 " The hour that tears my soul from thee :
 " Even Azrael, ¹⁸ from his deadly quiver
 " When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
 " That parts all else, shall doom for ever
 " Our hearts to undivided dust ! "

XII.

He lived—he breathed—he moved—he felt ;
 He raised the maid from where she knelt :
 His trance was gone—his keen eye shone
 With thoughts that long in darkness dwelt ;
 With thoughts that burn—in rays that melt,
 As the stream late concealed
 By the fringe of its willows,
 When it rushes revealed

In the light of its billows ;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flashed the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.
A war-horse at the trumpet's sound,
A lion roused by heedless hound,
A tyrant waked to sudden strife
By graze of ill-directed knife,
Starts not to more convulsive life
Than he, who heard that vow, displayed,
And all, before repressed, betrayed :
« Now thou art mine, for ever mine,
« With life to keep, and scarce with life resign ;
« Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
« Though sworn by one, hath bound us both.
« Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done,
« That vow hath saved more heads than one :
« But blench not thou—thy simplest tress
« Claims more from me than tenderness ;
« I would not wrong the slenderest hair
« That clusters round thy forehead fair,
« For all the treasures buried far
« Within the caves of Istakar. 19
« This morning clouds upon me lowered,
« Reproaches on my head were showered,
« And Giaffir almost called me coward !
« Now I have motive to be brave ;
« The son of his neglected slave,
« Nay, start not, 'twas the term he gave,
« May show, though little apt to vaunt,
« A heart his words nor deeds can daunt.
« *His* son, indeed !—yet, thanks to thee,
« Perchance I am, at least shall be ;

« But let our plighted secret vow
 « Be only known to us as now.
 « I know the wretch who dares demand
 « From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;
 « More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
 « Holds not a Musselim's²⁰ control:
 « Was he not bred in Egripo?²¹
 « A viler race let Israel show!
 « But let that pass—to none be told
 « Our oath; the rest shall time unfold.
 « To me and mine leave Osman Bey;
 « I've partizans for peril's day:
 « Think not I am what I appear;
 « I've arms, and friends, and vengeance near.

XIII.

« Think not thou art what thou appearest!
 « My Selim, thou art sadly changed:
 « This morn I saw thee gentlest, dearest;
 « But now thou'rt from thyself estranged.
 « My love thou surely knew'st before,
 « It ne'er was less, nor can be more.
 « To see thee, hear thee, near thee stay,
 « And hate the night I know not why,
 « Save that we meet not but by day;
 « With thee to live, with thee to die,
 « I dare not to my hope deny:
 « Thy cheek, thine eyes, thy lips to kiss,
 « Like this—and this—no more than this;
 « For, Alla! sure thy lips are flame:
 « What fever in thy veins is flushing?
 « My own have nearly caught the same,
 « At least I feel my cheek too blushing.
 « To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health,

« Partake, but never waste thy wealth,
« Or stand with smiles unmurmuring by,
« And lighten half thy poverty;
« Do all but close thy dying eye,
« For that I could not live to try;
« To these alone my thoughts aspire:
« More can I do? or thou require?
« But, Selim, thou must answer why
« We need so much of mystery?
« The cause I cannot dream nor tell,
« But be it, since thou say'st 'tis well;
« Yet what thou mean'st by 'arms' and 'friends'
« Beyond my weaker sense extends.
« I meant that Giaffir should have heard
 « The very vow I plighted thee;
« His wrath would not revoke my word:
 « But surely he would leave me free.
 « Can this fond wish seem strange in me,
« To be what I have ever been?
« What other hath Zuleika seen
« From simple childhood's earliest hour?
 « What other can she seek to see
« Than thee, companion of her bower,
 « The partner of her infancy?
« These cherished thoughts with life begun,
 « Say, why must I no more avow?
« What change is wrought to make me shun
 « The truth; my pride, and thine till now?
« To meet the gaze of stranger's eyes
« Our law, our creed, our God denies;
« Nor shall one wandering thought of mine
« At such, our Prophet's will, repine:
« No! happier made by that decree,
« He left me all in leaving thee.

« Deep were my anguish, thus compelled
 « To wed with one I ne'er beheld :
 « This wherefore should I not reveal ?
 « Why wilt thou urge me to conceal ?
 « I know the Pacha's haughty mood
 « To thee hath never boded good ;
 « And he so often storms at nought,
 « Allah ! forbid that e'er he ought !
 « And why I know not, but within
 « My heart concealment weighs like sin.
 « If then such secrecy be crime,
 « And such it feels while lurking here ;
 « Oh, Selim ! tell me yet in time,
 « Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.
 « Ah ! yonder see the Tchocadar,²²
 « My father leaves the mimic war ;
 « I tremble now to meet his eye—
 « Say, Selim, can'st thou tell me why ? »

XIV.

« Zuleika ! to thy tower's retreat
 « Betake thee—Giaffir I can greet :
 « And now with him I fain must prate
 « Of firmans, imposts, levies, state.
 « There's fearful news from Danube's banks ;
 « Our vizier nobly thins his ranks,
 « For which the Giaour may give him thanks !
 « Our Sultan hath a shorter way
 « Such costly triumph to repay.
 « But, mark me, when the twilight drum
 « Hath warned the troops to food and sleep,
 « Unto thy cell will Selim come :
 « Then softly from the Haram creep

- “ Where we may wander by the deep :
“ Our garden-battlements are steep ;
“ Nor these will rash intruder climb
“ To list our words, or stint our time,
“ And if he doth, I want not steel
“ Which some have felt, and more may feel.
“ Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
“ Than thou hast heard or thought before ;
“ Trust me, Zuleika—fear not me !
“ Thou know’st I hold a Haram key. ”
“ Fear thee, my Selim ! ne’er till now
“ Did word like this— ”
“ Delay not thou ;
“ I keep the key—and Haroun’s guard
“ Have *some*, and hope of *more* reward.
“ To night, Zuleika, thou shalt hear
“ My tale, my purpose, and my fear :
“ I am not, love ! what I appear. ”

END OF CANTO I.

THE
BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

CANTO II.

I.

THE winds are high on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave,
The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter.
Oh! when alone along the sky
Her turret-torch was blazing high,
Though rising gale, and breaking foam,
And shrieking sea-birds warned him home;
And clouds aloft and tides below,
With signs and sounds, forbade to go,
He could not see, he would not hear
Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
His eye but saw that light of love,
The only star it hailed above;
His ear but rang with Hero's song,
"Ye, waves, divide not lovers long!" —
That tale is old, but love anew
May nerve young hearts to prove as true.

II.

The winds are high, and Helle's tide
Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
And Night's descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedewed in vain,

The desart of old Priam's pride;
 The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
 All—save immortal dreams that could beguile
 The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle!

III.

Oh! yet—for there my steps have been;
 These feet have pressed the sacred shore,
 These limbs that buoyant wave hath borne—
 Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
 To trace again those fields of yore,
 Believing every hillock green
 Contains no fabled hero's ashes,
 And that around the undoubted scene
 Thine own « broad Hellespont » ²³ still dashes,
 Be long my lot! and cold were he
 Who there could gaze denying thee!

IV.

The night hath closed on Helle's stream,
 Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill
 That moon, which shone on his high theme:
 No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
 But conscious shepherds bless it still.
 Their flocks are grazing on the mound
 Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow:
 That mighty heap of gathered ground
 Which Ammon's ²⁴ son ran proudly round,
 By nations raised, by monarchs crowned,
 Is now a lone and nameless barrow!
 Within—thy dwelling-place how narrow!
 Without—can only strangers breathe
 The name of him that *was* beneath:

Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
But Thou—thy very dust is gone!

V.

Late, late to night will Dian cheer
The swain, and chase the boatman's fear;
Till then—no beacon on the cliff
May shape the course of struggling skiff;
The scattered lights that skirt the bay,
All, one by one, have died away;
The only lamp of this lone hour
Is glimmering in Zuleika's tower.

Yes! there is light in that lone chamber,

And o'er her silken Ottoman
Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,

O'er which her fairy fingers ran; ²⁵

Near these, with emerald rays beset,

(How could she thus that gem forget?)

Her mother's sainted amulet, ²⁶

Whereon engraved the Koorsee text,

Could smooth this life, and win the next;

And by her Comboloio ²⁷ lies

A Koran of illumined dyes;

And many a bright emblazoned rhyme

By Persian scribes redeemed from time;

And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,

Reclines her now neglected lute;

And round her lamp of fretted gold

Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;

The richest work of Iran's loom,

And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;

All that can eye or sense delight

Are gathered in that gorgeous room;

But yet it hath an air of gloom.

She, of this Peri cell the sprite,
What doth she hence, and on so rude a night?

VI.

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
Which none save noblest Moslem wear,
To guard from winds of heaven the breast
As heaven itself to Selim dear,
With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow moanings made,
Till on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And, though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side?
How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII.

They reached at length a grotto, hewn
By nature, but enlarged by art,
Where oft her lute she wot to tune,
And oft her Koran conned apart;
And oft in youthful reverie
She dreamed what Paradise might be:
Where woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdained to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure,
Nor deemed she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss,
Without *her*, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII.

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seemed wrought within the grot:
It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw
A ray of no celestial hue;
But in a nook within the cell
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as wield
The turbaned Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red—perchance with guilt!
Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet.
What may this mean? she turned to see
Her Selim—« Oh! can this be he? »

IX.

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crowned turban bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples wore:
That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glittered at his waist,
Where pistols unadorned were braced;
And from his belt a sabre swung,
And from his shoulder loosely hung
The cloak of white, the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiote:

Beneath—his golden plated vest
 Clung like a cuirass to his breast ;
 The greaves below his knee that wound
 With silvery scales were sheathed and bound.
 But were it not that high command
 Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand,
 All that a careless eye could see
 In him was some young Galiongee. ²⁸

X.

« I said I was not what I seemed ;
 « And now thou seest my words were true :
 « I have a tale thou hast not dreamed,
 « If sooth—its truth must others rue.
 « My story now 'twere vain to hide,
 « I must not see thee Osman's bride :
 « But had not thine own lips declared
 « How much of that young heart I shared,
 « I could not, must not, yet have shown
 « The darker secret of my own.
 « In this I speak not now of love ;
 « That, let time, truth, and peril prove :
 « But first—Oh ! never wed another—
 « Zuleika ! I am not thy brother ! »

XI.

« Oh ! not my brother !—yet unsay—
 « God ! am I left alone on earth
 « To mourn—I dare not curse—the day
 « That saw my solitary birth ?
 « Oh ! thou wilt love me now no more !
 « My sinking heart foreboded ill ;
 « But know *me* all I was before,
 « Thy sister—friend—Zuleika still.

“ Thou led'st me here perchance to kill :
“ If thou hast cause for vengeance, see !
“ My breast is offered—take thy fill !
“ Far better with the dead to be
“ Than live thus nothing now to thee :
“ Perhaps far worse, for now I know
“ Why Giaffir always seemed thy foe ;
“ And I, alas ! am Giaffir's child,
“ For whom thou wert contemned, reviled.
“ If not thy sister—wouldst thou save
“ My life, Oh ! bid me be thy slave ! ”

XII.

“ My slave, Zuleika !—nay, I'm thine :
“ But, gentle love, this transport calm,
“ Thy lot shall yet be linked with mine ;
“ I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
“ And be that thought thy sorrow's balm.
“ So may the Koran²⁹ verse displayed
“ Upon its steel direct my blade,
“ In danger's hour to guard us both,
“ As I preserve that awful oath !
“ The name in which thy heart hath prided
“ Must change ; but, my Zuleika, know,
“ That tie is widened, not divided,
“ Although thy Sire's my deadliest foe.
“ My father was to Giaffir all
“ That Selim late was deemed to thee ;
“ That brother wrought a brother's fall,
“ But spared, at least, my infancy ;
“ And lulled me with a vain deceit
“ That yet a like return may meet.
“ He reared me, not with tender help,
“ But like the nephew of a Cain ;³⁰

« He watched me like a lion's whelp,
 « That gnaws and yet may break his chain.
 « My father's blood in every vein
 « Is boiling ; but for thy dear sake
 « No present vengeance will I take ;
 « Though here I must no more remain,
 « But first, beloved Zuleika ! hear
 « How Giaffir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII.

« How first their strife to rancour grew,
 « If love or envy made them foes,
 « It matters little if I knew ;
 « In fiery spirits, slights, though few
 « And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
 « In war Abdallah's arm was strong,
 « Remembered yet in Bosniac song,
 « And Paswan's³¹ rebel hordes attest
 « How little love they bore such guest :
 « His death is all I need relate,
 « The stern effect of Giaffir's hate ;
 « And how my birth disclosed to me,
 « Whate'er beside it makes, hath made me free.

XIV.

« When Paswan, after years of strife,
 « At last for power, but first for life,
 « In Widin's walls too proudly sate,
 « Our Pachas rallied round the state ;
 « Nor last nor least in high command
 « Each brother led a separate band ;
 « They gave their horsetails³² to the wind,
 « And mustering in Sophia's plain
 « Their tents were pitched, their post assigned ;

- « To one, alas ! assigned in vain !
« What need of words ? the deadly bowl,
« By Giaffir's order drugged and given,
« With venom subtle as his soul,
« Dismissed Abdallah's hence to heaven.
« Reclined and feverish in the bath,
« He, when the hunter's sport was up,
« But little deemed a brother's wrath
« To quench his thirst had such a cup :
« The bowl a bribed attendant bore ;
« He drank one draught,³³ nor needed more !
« If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
« Call Haroun—he can tell it out.

XV.

- « The deed once done, and Paswan's feud
« In part suppressed, though ne'er subdued,
« Abdallah's Pachalick was gained :—
« Thou know'st not what in our Divan
« Can wealth procure for worse than man—
« Abdallah's honours were obtained
« By him a brother's murder stained ;
« 'Tis true, the purchase nearly drained
« His ill got treasure, soon replaced.
« Would'st question whence ? Survey the waste,
« And ask the squalid peasant how
« His gains repay his broiling brow !—
« Why me the stern usurper spared,
« Why thus with me his palace shared,
« I know not. Shame, regret, remorse,
« And little fear from infant's force ;
« Besides, adoption as a son
« By him whom Heaven accorded none,

« Or some unknown cabal, caprice,
« Preserved me thus ;—but not in peace :
« He cannot curb his haughty mood,
« Nor I forgive a father's blood.

XVI.

« Within thy father's house are foes ;
 « Not all who break his bread are true :
« To these should I my birth disclose,
 « His days, his very hours were few.
« They only want a heart to lead,
« A hand to point them to the deed.
« But Haroun only knows, or knew
« This tale, whose close is almost nigh :
« He in Abdallah's palace grew,
« And held that post in his Serai
« Which holds he here—he saw him die :
« But what could single slavery do ?
« Avenge his lord ? alas ! too late ;
« Or save his son from such a fate ?
« He chose the last, and when elate
 « With foes subdued, or friends betrayed,
« Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
« He led me helpless to his gate,
 « And not in vain it seems essayed
 « To save the life for which he prayed.
« The knowledge of my birth secured
 « From all and each, but most from me ;
« Thus Giaffir's safety was ensured.
 « Removed he too from Roumelie
« To this our Asiatic side,
« Far from our seats by Danube's tide,

« With none but Haroun, who retains
« Such knowledge—and that Nubian feels
« A tyrant's secrets are but chains,
« From which the captive gladly steals,
« And this and more to me reveals :
« Such still to guilt just Alla sends
« Slaves, tools, accomplices—no friends !

XVII.

« All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds ;
« But harsher still my tale must be
« Howe'er my tongue thy softness wounds,
« Yet I must prove all truth to thee.
« I saw thee start this garb to see,
« Yet is it one I oft have worn,
« And long must wear : this Galiongee,
« To whom thy plighted vow is sworn,
« Is leader of those pirate hordes,
« Whose laws and lives are on their swords ;
« To hear whose desolating tale
« Would make thy waning cheek more pale :
« Those arms thou see'st my band have brought,
« The hands that wield are not remote ;
« This cup too for the rugged knaves
« Is filled—once quaffed, they ne'er repine :
« Our Prophet might forgive the slaves ;
« They're only infidels in wine.

XVIII.

« What could I be? Proscribed at home,
« And taunted to a wish to roam ;
« And listless left—for Giaffir's fear
« Denied the courser and the spear—

« Though oft—Oh, Mahomet! how oft!—
 « In full Divan the despot scoffed,
 « As if *my* weak unwilling hand
 « Refused the bridle or the brand:
 « He ever went to war alone,
 « And pent me here untried, unknown;
 « To Haroun's care with women left,
 « By hope unblest, of fame bereft.
 « While thou—whose softness long endeared,
 « Though it unmanned me, still had cheered—
 « To Brusa's walls for safety sent,
 « Awaited'st there the field's event.
 « Haroun, who saw my spirit pining
 « Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke,
 « His captive, though with dread resigning,
 « My thralldom for a season broke,
 « On promise to return before
 « The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
 « 'Tis vain—my tongue can not impart
 « My almost drunkenness of heart,
 « When first this liberated eye
 « Surveyed Earth, Ocean, Sun and Sky,
 « As if my spirit pierced them through,
 « And all their inmost wonders knew!
 « One word alone can paint to thee
 « That more than feeling—I was Free!
 « E'en for thy presence ceased to pine;
 « The World—nay—Heaven itself was mine!

XIX.

« The shallop of a trusty Moor
 « Conveyed me from this idle shore;
 « I longed to see the isles that gem
 « Old Ocean's purple diadem:

« I sought by turns, and saw them all ; ³⁴
« But when and where I joined the crew,
« With whom I'm pledged to rise or fall,
« When all that we design to do
« Is done, twill then be time more meet
« To tell thee, when the tale's complete.

XX.

« 'Tis true, they are a lawless brood,
« But rough in form, nor mild in mood ;
« And every creed, and every race,
« With them hath found—may find a place :
« But open speech, and ready hand,
« Obedience to their chief's command ;
« A soul for every enterprize,
« That never sees with terror's eyes ;
« Friendship for each, and faith to all,
« And vengeance vow'd for those who fall,
« Have made them fitting instruments
« For more than ev'n my own intents.
« And some—and I have studied all
« Distinguished from the vulgar rank,
« But chiefly to my council call
« The wisdom of the cautious Frank—
« And some to higher thoughts aspire,
« The last of Lambro's ³⁵ patriots there
« Anticipated freedom share ;
« And oft around the cavern fire
« On visionary schemes debate,
« To snatch the Rayahs ³⁶ from their fate.
« So let them ease their hearts with prate
« Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew ;
« I have a love for freedom too.

“ Ay ! let me like the Ocean-Patriarch ³⁷ roam,
“ Or only know on land the Tartar’s home ! ³⁸
“ My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
“ Are more than cities and Serais to me :
“ Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
“ Across the desert, or before the gale,
“ Bound where thou wilt, my barb ! or glide my prow !
“ But be the star that guides the wanderer, Thou !
“ Thou, my Zuleika, share and bless my bark ;
“ The dove of peace and promise to mine ark !
“ Or, since that hope denied in worlds of strife,
“ Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life !
“ The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
“ And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray !
“ Blest—as the Muezzin’s strain from Mecca’s wall
“ To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call ;
“ Soft—as the melody of youthful days,
“ That steals the trembling tear of speechless praise ;
“ Dear—as his native song to Exile’s ears,
“ Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice endears.
“ For thee in those bright isles is built a bower
“ Blooming as Aden ³⁹ in its earliest hour.
“ A thousand swords, with Selim’s heart and hand,
“ Wait—wave—defend—destroy—at thy command !
“ Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
“ The spoil of nations shall bedeck my bride.
“ The Haram’s languid years of listless ease
“ Are well resigned for cares—for joys like these :
“ Not blind to fate, I see, where’er I rove,
“ Unnumbered perils—but one only love !
“ Yet well my toils shall that fond breast repay,
“ Though fortune frown, or falser friends betray.
“ How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
“ Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still !

« Be but thy soul, like Selim's, firmly shown;
« To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;
« To soothe each sorrow, share in each delight,
« Blend every thought, do all—but disunite!
« Once free, 'tis mine our horde again to guide;
« Friends to each other, foes to aught beside:
« Yet there we follow but the bent assigned
« By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
« Mark! where his carnage and his conquests cease!
« He makes a solitude, and calls it—peace!
« I like the rest must use my skill or strength,
« But ask no land beyond my sabre's length:
« Power sways but by division—her resource
« The blest alternative of fraud or force!
« Ours be the last; in time deceit may come
« When cities cage us in a social home:
« There ev'n thy soul might err—how oft the heart
« Corruption shakes which peril could not part!
« And woman, more than man, when death or woe
« Or even Disgrace would lay her lover low,
« Sunk in the lap of Luxury will shame—
« Away suspicion! *not* Zuleika's name!
« But life is hazard at the best; and here
« No more remains to win, and much to fear:
« Yes, fear!—the doubt, the dread of losing thee,
« By Osman's power and Giaffir's stern decree.
« That dread shall vanish with the favouring gale,
« Which Love to-night hath promised to my sail:
« No danger daunts the pair his smile hath blest,
« Their steps still roving, but their hearts at rest.
« With thee all toils are sweet, each clime hath charms;
« Earth—sea alike—our world within our arms!
« Ay—let the loud winds whistle o'er the deck,
« So that those arms cling closer round my neck:

« The deepest murmur of this lip shall be
 « No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee !
 « The war of elements no fears impart
 « To Love, whose deadliest bane is human art :
 « *There* lie the only rocks our course can check ;
 « *Here* moments menace—*there* are years of wreck !
 « But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's shape !
 « This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
 « Few words remain of mine my tale to close ;
 « Of thine but *one* to waft us from our foes ;
 « Yea—foes—to me will Giaffir's hate decline ?
 « And is not Osman, who would part us, thine ?

XXI.

« His head and faith from doubt and death
 « Returned in time my guard to save ;
 « Few heard, none told, that o'er the wave
 « From isle to isle I roved the while :
 « And since, though parted from my band
 « Too seldom now I leave the land,
 « No deed they've done, nor deed shall do,
 « Ere I have heard and doomed it too :
 « I form the plan, decree the spoil,
 « 'Tis fit I oftener share the toil.
 « But now too long I've held thine ear ;
 « Time presses, floats my bark, and here
 « We leave behind but hate and fear.
 « To-morrow Osman with his train
 « Arrives—to-night must break thy chain :
 « And would'st thou save that haughty Bey,
 « Perchance *his* life who gave thee thine,
 « With me this hour away—away !
 « But yet, though thou art plighted mine,

« Would'st thou recall thy willing vow,
 « Appalled by truths imparted now,
 « Here rest I—not to see thee wed :
 « But be that peril on *my* head ! »

XXII.

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
 Stood like that statue of distress,
 When, her last hope for ever gone,
 The mother hardened into stone ;
 All in the maid that eye could see

Or But a younger Niobe.

But ere her lip, or ev'n her eye,
 Essayed to speak, or look reply,
 Beneath the garden's wicket porch
 Far flashed on high a blazing torch !
 Another—and another—and another—
 « Oh ! fly—no more—yet now my more than brother ! »
 Far, wide, through every thicket spread,
 The fearful lights are gleaming red ;
 Nor these alone—for each right hand
 Is ready with a sheathless brand.
 They part, pursue, return, and wheel
 With searching flambeau, shining steel ;
 And last of all, his sabre waving,
 Stern Giaffir in his fury raving :
 And now almost they touch the cave—
 Oh ! must that grot be Selim's grave ?

XXIII.

Dauntless he stood.—« 'Tis come—soon past—
 « One kiss, Zuleika—'tis my last :
 « But yet my hand not far from shore
 « May hear this signal, see the flash ;

» Yet now too few—the attempt were rash :

» No matter—yet one effort more. »

Forth to the cavern mouth he stept ;

His pistol's echo rang on high.

Zuleika started not, nor wept,

Despair benumbed her breast and eye !—

« They hear me not, or if they ply

« Their oars, 'tis but to see me die ;

« That sound hath drawn my foes more nigh.

« Then forth my father's scimitar,

« Thou ne'er hast seen less equal war !

« Farewell, Zuleika !—Sweet ! retire :

« Yet stay within—here linger safe,

« At thee his rage will only chafe.

« Stir not—lest even to thee perchance

« Some erring blade or ball should glance.

« Fear'st thou for him ?—may I expire

« If in this strife I seek thy sire !

« No—though by him that poison poured ;

« No—though again he call me coward !

« But tamely shall I meet their steel ?

« No—as each crest save *his* may feel ! »

XXIV.

One bound he made, and gained the sand :

Already at his feet hath sunk

The foremost of the prying band,

A gasping head, a quivering trunk :

Another falls—but round him close

A swarming circle of his foes ;

From right to left his path he cleft,

And almost met the meeting wave ;

His boat appears—not five oars' length—

His comrades strain with desperate strength—

Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay,
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
Wet—wild—unwearied to the strand
They struggle—now they touch the land!
They come—'tis but to add to slaughter—
His heart's best blood is on the water!

XXV.

Escaped from shot, unharmed by steel,
Or scarcely grazed it's force to feel,
Had Selim won, betrayed, beset,
To where the strand and billows met:
There as his last step left the land,
And the last death-blow dealt his hand—
Ah! wherefore did he turn to look

For her his eye but sought in vain?
That pause, that fatal gaze he took,

Hath doomed his death, or fixed his chain.
Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
How late will Lover's hope remain!
His back was to the dashing spray;
Behind, but close, his comrades lay,
When, at the instant, hissed the ball—
« So may the foes of Giaffir fall! »
Whose voice is heard? whose carbine rang?
Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
Too nearly, deadly aimed to err?
'Tis thine—Abdallah's murderer!
The father slowly rued thy hate,
The son hath found a quicker fate:
Fast from his breast the blood is bubbling,
The whiteness of the sea-foam troubling—

If aught his lips essayed to groan,
The rushing billows choaked the tone !

XXVI.

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away ;

Few trophies of the fight are there :
The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
Are silent ; but some signs of fray

That strand of strife may bear,
And fragments of each shivered brand ;
Steps stamped ; and dashed into the sand
The print of many a struggling hand
May there be marked ; nor far remote
A broken torch, an oarless boat ;
And tangled on the weeds that heap
The beach where shelving to the deep
There lies a white Capote !

'Tis rent in twain—one dark-red stain
The wave yet ripples o'er in vain :

But where is he who wore ?

Ye ! who would o'er his relics weep
Go, seek them where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum's steep

And cast on Lemnos' shore :

The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow ;
That hand, whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
Flung by the tossing tide on high,

Then levelled with the wave—
What reck's it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave ?

The bird that tears that prostrate form
 Hath only robbed the meaner worm ;
 The only heart, the only eye
 Had bled or wept to see him die,
 Had seen those scattered limbs composed,
 And mourned above his turban-stone, ⁴⁰
 That heart hath burst—that eye was closed—
 Yea—closed before his own !

XXVII.

By Helle's stream there is a voice of wail !
 And woman's eye is wet—man's cheek is pale :
 Zuleika ! last of Giaffir's race,
 Thy destined lord is come too late ;
 He sees not—ne'er shall see thy face !
 Can he not hear
 The loud Wul-wulleh ⁴¹ warn his distant ear ?
 Thy handmaids weeping at the gate,
 The Koran-chaunters of the hymn of fate,
 The silent slaves with folded arms that wait,
 Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
 Tell him thy tale !
 Thou didst not view thy Selim fall !
 That fearful moment when he left the cave
 Thy heart grew chill :
 He was thy hope—thy joy—thy love—thine all—
 And that last thought on him thou could'st not save
 Sufficed to kill ;
 Burst forth in one wild cry—and all was still.
 Peace to thy broken heart, and virgin grave !
 Ah ! happy ! but of life to lose the worst !
 That grief—though deep—though fatal—was thy first !
 Thrice happy ! ne'er to feel nor fear the force
 Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, remorse !

And, oh! that pang where more than Madness lies!
 The worm that will not sleep—and never dies;
 Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
 That dreads the darkness, and yet loathes the light,
 That winds around, and tears the quiv'ring heart!
 Ah! wherefore not consume it—and depart!

Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting chief!

Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy head,
 Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs dost spread:
 By that same hand Abdallah—Selim bled.
 Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
 Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's bed,
 She, whom thy sultan had but seen to wed,
 Thy Daughter's dead!

Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely beam,
 The Star hath set that shone on Helle's stream.
 What quenched its ray?—the blood that thou hast shed!
 Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:
 "Where is my child?" an echo answers—"Where?" 42

XXVIII.

Within the place of thousand tombs
 That shine beneath, while dark above
 The sad but living cypress glooms
 And withers not, though branch and leaf
 Are stamped with an eternal grief,
 Like early unrequited Love,
 One spot exists, which ever blooms,
 Ev'n in that deadly grove—
 A single rose is shedding there
 Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
 It looks as planted by Despair—
 So white—so faint—the slightest gale

Might whirl the leaves on high ;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem—in vain—
To-morrow sees it bloom again !
The stalk some spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears ;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering hour,
And buds unsheltered by a bower ;
Nor droops, though spring refuse her shower,
Nor woos the summer beam :
To it the livelong night there sings
A bird unseen—but not remote :
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note !
It were the Bulbul ; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a strain :
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve
As if they loved in vain !
And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
'Tis sorrow so unmixed with dread,
They scarce can bear the morn to break
That melancholy spell,
And longer yet would weep and wake,
He sings so wild and well !
But when the day-blush bursts from high
Expires that magic melody.
And some have been who could believe
(So fondly youthful dreams deceive,
Yet harsh be they that blame)

That note so piercing and profound
Will shape and syllable its sound
Into Zuleika's name.⁴³

'Tis from her cypress' summit heard,
That melts in air the liquid word :
'Tis from her lowly virgin earth
That white rose takes its tender birth.
There late was laid a marble stone ;
Eve saw it placed—the Morrow gone !
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep-fixed pillar to the shore ;
For there, as Helle's legends tell,
Next morn 'twas found where Selim fell ;
Lashed by the tumbling tide, whose wave
Denied his bones a holier grave :
And there by night, reclined, 'tis said,
Is seen a ghastly turbaned head :
And hence extended by the billow,
'Tis named the « Pirate-phantom's pillow ! »
Where first it lay that mourning flower
Hath flourished ; flourisheth this hour,
Alone and dewy, coldly pure and pale,
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale !

NOTES

TO THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

Note 1, page 5, line 8.

Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom.

« Gul, » the rose.

Note 2, page 5, line 17.

Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?

« Souls made of fire, and children of the Sun,

« With whom Revenge is Virtue. »

YOUNG'S REVENGE.

Note 3, page 7, line 20.

With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song.

Mejnoun and Leila, the Romeo and Juliet of the East.

Sadi, the moral poet of Persia.

Note 4, page 7, line 21.

Till I, who heard the deep tambour.

Tambour, Turkish drum, which sounds at sunrise, noon, and twilight.

Note 5, page 9, line 29.

He is an Arab to my sight.

The Turks abhor the Arabs (who return the compliment a hundred fold) even more than they hate the Christians.

Note 6, page 11, line 30.

The mind, the Music breathing from her face.

This expression has met with objections. I will not refer to « Him who hath not Music in his soul, » but merely request the reader to recollect, for ten seconds, the features of the woman whom he believes to be the most beautiful ; and if he then does not comprehend fully what is feebly expressed in the above line, I shall be sorry for us both. For an eloquent passage in the latest work of the first female

writer of this, perhaps, of any age, on the analogy (and the immediate comparison excited by that analogy) between « painting and music, » see vol. iii. cap. 10. DE L'ALLEMAGNE. And is not this connexion still stronger with the original than the copy? With the colouring of Nature than of Art? After all, this is rather to be felt than described; still I think there are some who will understand it, at least they would have done had they beheld the countenance whose speaking harmony suggested the idea; for this passage is not drawn from imagination but memory, that mirror which affliction dashes to the earth, and looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied!

Note 7, page 11, line 22.

But yet the line of Carasman.

Carasman Oglou, or Kara Osman Oglou, is the principal landholder in Turkey, he governs Magnesia; those who, by a kind of feudal tenure, possess land on condition of service, are called Timariots: they serve as Spahis, according to the extent of territory, and bring a certain number into the field, generally cavalry.

Note 8, page 12, line 3.

And teach the messenger what fate.

When a Pacha is sufficiently strong to resist, the single messenger, who is always the first bearer of the order for his death, is strangled instead, and sometimes five or six, one after the other, on the same errand, by command of the refractory patient; if, on the contrary, he is weak or loyal, he bows, kisses the Sultan's respectable signature, and is bow-strung with great complacency. In 1810, several of these presents were exhibited in the niche of the Seraglio gate; among others, the head of the Pacha of Bagdat, a brave young man, cut off by treachery, after a desperate resistance.

Note 9, page 12, line 22.

Thrice clapped his hands, and called his steed.

Clapping of the hands calls the servants. The Turks hate a superfluous expenditure of voice, and they have no bells.

Note 10, page 12, line 23.

Resigned his gem-adorned Chibouque.

Chibouque, the turkish pipe, of which the amber mouth-piece, and sometimes the ball which contains the leaf, is adorned with precious stones, if in possession of the wealthier orders.

Note 11, page 12, line 25.

With Maugrabee and Mamaluke.

Maugrabee, Moorish mercenaries.

Note 12, page 12, line 26.

His way amid his Delis took.

Deli, bravos who form the forlorn hope of the cavalry, and always begin the action.

Note 13, page 13, line 8.

Careering cleave the folded felt.

A twisted fold of *felt* is used for scimitar practice by the Turks, and few but Mussulman arms can cut through it at a single stroke: sometimes a tough turban is used for the same purpose. The *jerreed* is a game of blunt javelins, animated and graceful.

Note 14, page 13, line 11.

Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud—

« Ollahs, » Alla il Allah, the « Leilies, » as the Spanish poets call them, the sound is Ollah; a cry of which the Turks, for a silent people, are somewhat profuse, particularly during the *jerreed*, or in the chase, but mostly in battle. Their animation in the field, and gravity in the chamber, with their pipes and comboloios, form an amusing contrast.

Note 15, page 13, line 30.

The Persian Atar-gul's perfume.

« Atar-gul, » ottar of roses. The Persian is the finest.

Note 16, page 14, line 2.

The pictured roof and marble floor.

The ceiling and wainscots, or rather walls. of the Mussulman apartments are generally painted, in great houses, with one eternal and highly coloured view of Constantinople, wherein the principal feature is a noble contempt of perspective; below, arms, scimitars, etc. are in general fancifully and not inelegantly disposed.

Note 17, page 14, line 18.

A message from the Bulbul bears.

It has been much doubted whether the notes of this «Lover of the rose» are sad or merry; and Mr. Fox's remarks on the subject have provoked some learned controversy as to the opinions of the ancients on the subject. I dare not venture a conjecture on the point, though a little inclined to the «errare malle» etc. *if* Mr. Fox *was* mistaken.

Note 18, page 15, line 21.

Even Azrael, from his deadly quiver.

«Azrael»—the angel of death.

Note 19, page 16, line 23.

Within the caves of Istakar.

The treasures of the Preadamite Sultans. See D'HERBELLOT, article *Istakar*.

Note 20, page 17, line 4.

Holds not a Musselim's control.

Musselim, a governor, the next in rank after a Pacha; a Waywode is the third; and then come the Agas.

Note 21, page 17, line 5.

Was he not bred in Egripo.

Egripo—the Negropont. According to the proverb, the Turks of Egripo, the Jews of Salonica, and the Greeks of Athens, are the worst of their respective races.

Note 22, page 19, line 15.

Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar.

«Tchocadar» — one of the attendants who precedes a man of authority.

Note 23, page 22, line 13.

Thine own «broad Hellespont» still dashes.

The wrangling about this epithet, «the broad Hellespont» or the «boundless Hellespont», whether it means one or the other, or what it means at all, has been beyond all possibility of detail. I have even heard it disputed on the spot; and not foreseeing a speedy conclusion to the controversy, amused myself with swimming across it in the mean time, and probably may again, before the point is settled. In-

deed, the question as to the truth of « the tale of Troy divine » still continues, much of it resting upon the talismanic word « *απειρος* : » probably Homer had the same notion of distance that a coquette has of time, and when he talks of boundless, means half a mile ; as the latter, by a like figure, when she says *eternal* attachment, simply specifies three weeks.

Note 24, page 22, line 24.

Which Ammon's son ran proudly round.

Before his Persian invasion, and crowned the altar with laurel, etc. He was afterwards imitated by Caracalla in his race. It is believed that the last also poisoned a friend, named Festus, for the sake of new Patroclan games. I have seen the sheep feeding on the tombs of *Æsietes* and *Antilochus* ; the first is in the centre of the plain.

Note 25, page 23, line 14.

O'er which her fairy fingers ran.

When rubbed, the amber is susceptible of a perfume, which is slight but not disagreeable.

Note 26, page 23, line 17.

Her mother's sainted amulet.

The belief in amulets engraved on gems, or enclosed in gold boxes, containing scraps from the Koran, worn round the neck, wrist, or arm, is still universal in the East. The *Koorsee* (throne) verse in the second cap. of the Koran describes the attributes of the Most High, and is engraved in this manner, and worn by the pious, as the most esteemed and sublime of all sentences.

Note 27, page 23, line 20.

And by her Comboloio lies.

« *Comboloio* »—a Turkish rosary. The MSS. particularly those of the Persians, are richly adorned and illuminated.

The Greek females are kept in utter ignorance ; but many of the Turkish girls are highly accomplished, though not actually qualified for a Christian coterie ; perhaps some of our own « *blues* » might not be the worse for *bleaching*.

Note 28, page 26, line 8.

In him was some young Galiongee.

« *Galiongee* »—or *Galiongi*, a sailor, that is, a *Turkish*

sailor; the Greeks navigate, the Turks work the guns. Their dress is picturesque; and I have seen the Capitan Pacha more than once wearing it as a kind of *incog*. Their legs, however, are generally naked. The buskins described in the text as sheathed behind with silver, are those of an Arnaut robber, who was my host (he had quitted the profession), at his Pyrgo, near Gastouni in the Morea; they were plated in scales one over the other, like the back of an armadillo.

Note 29, page 27, line 17.

So may the Koran verse displayed.

The characters on all Turkish scimitars contain sometimes the name of the place of their manufacture, but more generally a text from the Koran, in letters of gold. Amongst those in my possession is one with a blade of singular construction; it is very broad, and the edge notched into serpentine curves like the ripple of water, or the wavering of flame. I asked the Armenian who sold it, what possible use such a figure could add: he said, in Italian, that he did not know; but the Mussulmans had an idea that those of this form gave a severer wound; and liked it because it was « *più feroce.* » I did not much admire the reason, but bought it for its peculiarity.

Note 30, page 27, line 32.

But like the nephew of a Cain.

It is to be observed, that every allusion to any thing or personage in the Old Testament, such as the Ark, or Cain, is equally the privilege of Mussulman and Jew; indeed the former profess to be much better acquainted with the lives, true and fabulous, of the patriarchs, than is warranted by our own Sacred writ, and not content with Adam, they have a biography of Pre-Adamites. Solomon is the monarch of all necromancy, and Moses a prophet inferior only to Christ and Mahomet. Zuleika is the Persian name of Potiphar's wife, and her amour with Joseph constitutes one of the finest poems in their language. It is therefore no violation of costume to put the names of Cain, or Noah, into the mouth of a Moslem.

Note 31, page 28, line 16.

And Paswan's rebel hordes attest.

Paswan Oglou, the rebel of Widin, who for the last years of his life set the whole power of the Porte at defiance.

Note 32, page 28, line 28.

They gave their horsetails to the wind.

Horsetail, the standard of a Pacha.

Note 33, page 29, line 11.

He drank one draught, nor needed more!

Giaffir, Pacha of Argyro Castro, or Scutari, I am not sure which, was actually taken off by the Albanian Ali, in the manner described in the text. Ali Pacha, while I was in the country, married the daughter of his victim, some years after the event had taken place at a bath in Sophia, or Adrianople. The poison was mixed in the cup of coffee which is presented before the sherbet by the bath-keeper, after dressing.

Note 34, page 33, line 1.

I sought by turns, and saw them all.

The Turkish notions of almost all islands are confined to the Archipelago, the sea alluded to.

Note 35, page 33, line 24.

The last of Lambro's patriots there.

Lambro Canzani, a Greek, famous for his efforts in 1789—90 for the independence of his country: abandoned by the Russians, he became a pirate, and the Archipelago was the scene of his enterprizes. He is said to be still alive at Petersburg. He and Riga are the two most celebrated of the Greek revolutionists.

Note 36, page 33, line 28.

To snatch the Rayahs from their fate.

« Rayahs, » all who pay the capitation tax, called the « Haratch. »

Note 37, page 34, line 1.

Ay, let me like the Ocean-Patriarch roam.

This first of voyages is one of the few with which the Mussulmans profess much acquaintance,

Note 38, page 34, line 2.

Or only know on land the Tartar's home.

The wandering life of the Arabs, Tartars, and Turko-mans, will be found well detailed in any book of Eastern travels. That it possesses a charm peculiar to itself cannot be denied. A young French renegado confessed to Chateaubriand, that he never found himself alone, galloping in the desert, without a sensation approaching to rapture, which was indescribable.

Note 39, page 34, line 22.

Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour.

« Jannat al Aden, » the perpetual abode, the Mussulman Paradise.

Note 40, page 41, line 6.

And mourned above his turban-stone.

A turban is carved in stone above the graves of *men* only.

Note 41, page 41, line 15.

The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear.

The death-song of the Turkish women. The « silent slaves » are the men whose notions of decorum forbid complaint in *public*.

Note 42, page 42, line 19.

« *Where is my child?* »—*an echo answers*—« *Where?* »

« I came to the place of my birth and cried, ' the friends of my youth, where are they?' and an Echo answered, « ' Where are they?' »

From an Arabic MS.

The above quotation (from which the idea in the text is taken) must be already familiar to every reader—it is given in the first annotation, page 67, of « The Pleasures of Memory ; » a poem so well known as to render a reference almost superfluous ; but to whose pages all will be delighted to recur.

Note 43, page 44, line 2.

Into Zuleika's name.

« And airy tongues that syllable men's names. »

MILTON.

For a belief that the souls of the dead inhabit the form of birds, we need not travel to the East. Lord Lyttleton's ghost story; the belief of the Duchess of Kendal, that George I. flew into her window in the shape of a raven (see Orford's Reminiscences), and many other instances, bring this superstition nearer home. The most singular was the whim of a Worcester lady, who believing her daughter to exist in the shape of a singing bird, literally furnished her pew in the Cathedral with cages full of the kind; and as she was rich, and a benefactress in beautifying the church, no objection was made to her harmless folly.—For this anecdote, see Orford's Letters.

THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

MY DEAR MRS. MOORE,

THE CORSAIR.

A TALE.

« ——— I suoi pensieri in lui dormir non ponno. »

TASSO, *canto decimo, Gerusalemme Liberata.*

TO

THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

MY DEAR MOORE,

I DEDICATE to you the last production with which I shall trespass on public patience, and your indulgence, for some years ; and I own that I feel anxious to avail myself of this latest and only opportunity of adorning my pages with a name, consecrated by unshaken public principle, and the most undoubted and various talents. While Ireland ranks you among the firmest of her patriots ; while you stand alone the first of her bards in her estimation, and Britain repeats and ratifies the decree, permit one, whose only regret, since our first acquaintance, has been the years he had lost before it commenced, to add the humble but sincere suffrage of friendship, to the voice of more than one nation. It will at least prove to you, that I have neither forgotten the gratification derived from your society, nor abandoned the prospect of its renewal, whenever your leisure or inclination allows you to atone to your friends for too long an absence. It is said among those friends, I trust truly, that you are engaged in the composition of a poem whose scene will be laid in the East ; none can do those scenes so much justice. The wrongs of your own coun-

try, the magnificent and fiery spirit of her sons, the beauty and feeling of her daughters, may there be found ; and Collins, when he denominated his Oriental his Irish Eclogues, was not aware how true, at least, was a part of his parallel. Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky ; but wildness, tenderness, and originality are part of your national claim of oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians.

May I add a few words on a subject on which all men are supposed to be fluent, and none agreeable ? — Self. I have written much, and published more than enough to demand a longer silence than I now meditate ; but for some years to come it is my intention to tempt no further the award of « Gods, men, nor columns. » In the present composition I have attempted not the most difficult, but, perhaps, the best adapted measure to our language, the good old and now neglected heroic couplet. The stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative ; though, I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart : Scott alone, of the present generation has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the octo - syllabic verse ; and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius : in blank verse, Milton, Thom-

son, and our dramatists, are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rock on which they are kindled. The heroic couplet is not the most popular measure certainly; but as I did not deviate into the other from a wish to flatter what is called public opinion, I shall quit it without further apology, and take my chance once more with that versification, in which I have hitherto published nothing but compositions whose former circulation is part of my present and will be of my future regret.

With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, in as much as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so — if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of « drawing from self, » the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining; but I cannot help a little surprise, and perhaps amusement, at some odd critical exceptions in the present instance, when I see several bards, (far more deserving, I allow), in very reputable plight, and quite

exempted from all participation in the faults of those heroes, who, nevertheless, might be found with little more morality than « The Giaour, » and perhaps — but no — I must admit Childe Harold to be a very repulsive personage ; and, as to his identity, those who like it must give him whatever « alias » they please.

If, however, it were worth while to remove the impression, it might be of some service to me, that the man who is alike the delight of his readers and his friends, the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own, permits me here and elsewhere to subscribe myself,

most truly,

and affectionately,

his obedient servant,

BYRON.

January 2, 1814.

THE CORSAIR.

A TALE.

CANTO I.

« ——— nessun maggior dolore,
« Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
« Nella miseria, ——— — »

DANTE.

I.

« O'ER the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
« Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
« Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
« Survey our empire and behold our home!
« These are our realms, no limits to their sway—
« Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
« Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
« From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
« Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave!
« Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave;
« Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease!
« Whom slumber soothes not—pleasure cannot please—
« Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
« And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
« The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
« That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?
« That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
« And turn what some deem danger to delight;
« That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
« And where the feeble faint—can only feel—

« Feel—to the rising bosom's inmost core,
 « Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?
 « No dread of death—if with us die our foes—
 « Save that it seems even duller than repose :
 « Come when it will—we snatch the life of life—
 « When lost—what reck's it—by disease or strife?
 « Let him who crawls enamoured of decay,
 « Cling to his couch, and sicken years away ;
 « Heave his thick breath ; and shake his palsied head ;
 « Ours—the fresh turf, and not the feverish bed.
 « While gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
 « Ours with one pang—one bound—escapes controul.
 « His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
 « And they who loathed his life may gild his grave :
 « Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
 « When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead.
 « For us, even banquets fond regret supply
 « In the red cup that crowns our memory ;
 « And the brief epitaph in danger's day,
 « When those who win at length divide the prey,
 « And cry, Remembrance saddening o'er each brow,
 « How had the brave who fell exulted *now* ! »

II.

Such were the notes that from the Pirate's isle,
 Around the kindling watch-fire rang the while ;
 Such were the sounds that thrilled the rocks along,
 And unto ears as rugged seemed a song !
 In scattered groups upon the golden sand,
 They game—carouse—converse—or whet the brand ;
 Select the arms—to each his blade assign,
 And careless eye the blood that dims its shine :
 Repair the boat, replace the helm or oar,
 While others straggling muse along the shore ;

For the wild bird the busy springes set,
Or spread beneath the sun the dripping net ;
Gaze where some distant sail a speck supplies,
With all the thirsting eye of Enterprize ;
Tell o'er the tales of many a night of toil,
And marvel where they next shall seize a spoil :
No matter where—their chief's allotment this ;
Theirs, to believe no prey nor plan amiss.
But who that CHIEF ? his name on every shore
Is famed and feared—they ask and know no more.
With these he mingles not but to command ;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.
Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess,
But they forgive his silence for success.
Ne'er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still—
And for his fare—the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have passed untasted too ;
Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit's board would scarce deny.
But while he shuns the grosser joys of sense,
His mind seems nourished by that abstinence.
« Steer to that shore ! »—they sail. « Do this ! »—'tis done :
« Now form and follow me ! »—the spoil is won.
Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,
And all obey and few enquire his will ;
To such, brief answer and contemptuous eye
Convey reproof, nor further deign reply.

III.

« A sail ! —a sail ! » a promised prize to Hope !
Her nation—flag—how speaks the telescope ?

No prize, alas!—but yet a welcome sail :
The blood-red signal glitters in the gale.
Yes—she is ours—a home returning bark—
Blow fair, thou breeze!—she anchors ere the dark.
Already doubled is the cape—our bay
Receives that prow which proudly spurns the spray.
How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying—never from her foes—
She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the battle-fire—the wreck—
To move the monarch of her peopled deck?

IV.

Hoarse o'er her side the rustling cable rings ;
The sails are furled ; and anchoring round she swings :
And gathering loiterers on the land discern
Her boat descending from the latticed stern.
'Tis manned—the oars keep concert to the strand,
Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand.
Hail to the welcome shout!—the friendly speech!
When hand grasps hand uniting on the beach ;
The smile, the question, and the quick reply,
And the heart's promise of festivity!

V.

The tidings spread, and gathering grows the crowd :
The hum of voices, and the laughter loud,
And woman's gentler anxious tone is heard—
Friends'—husbands'—lovers' names in each dear word:
« Oh ! are they safe? we ask not of success—
« But shall we see them? will their accents bless?
« From where the battle roars—the billows chafe—
« They doubtless boldly did—but who are safe?

« Here let them haste to gladden and surprize,
« And kiss the doubt from these delighted eyes! »—

VI.

« Where is our chief? for him we bear report—
« And doubt that joy—which hails our coming—short;
« Yet thus sincere—'tis cheering, though so brief;
« But, Juan! instant guide us to our chief:
« Our greeting paid, we'll feast on our return,
« And all shall hear what each may wish to learn. »
Ascending slowly by the rock-hewn way,
To where his watch-tower beetles o'er the bay,
By bushy brake and wild-flowers blossoming,
And freshness breathing from each silver spring,
Whose scattered streams from granite basins burst,
Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst;
From crag to cliff they mount—Near yonder cave,
What lonely straggler looks along the wave?
In pensive posture leaning on the brand,
Not oft a resting-staff to that red hand?
« 'Tis he—'tis Conrad—here—as wont—alone;
« On—Juan! on—and make our purpose known.
« The bark he views—and tell him we would greet
« His ear with tidings he must quickly meet:
« We dare not yet approach—thou know'st his mood,
« When strange or uninvited steps intrude. »

VII.

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent—
He spake not—but a sign expressed assent.
These Juan calls—they come—to their salute
He bends him slightly, but his lips are mute.
« These letters, Chief, are from the Greek—the spy,
« Who still proclaims our spoil or peril nigh:

«Whate'er his tidings, we can well report,
 «Much that»--«Peace, peace!»--He cuts their prating short.
 Wondering they turn, abashed, while each to each
 Conjecture whispers in his muttering speech :
 They watch his glance with many a stealing look,
 To gather how that eye the tidings took ;
 But, this as if he guessed, with head aside,
 Perchance from some emotion, doubt, or pride,
 He read the scroll--« My tablets, Juan, hark--
 « Where is Gonsalvo ? »

« In the anchored bark. »

« There let him stay—to him this order bear.
 « Back to your duty—for my course prepare :
 « Myself this enterprize to-night will share. »
 « To-night, Lord Conrad ? »

« Ay ! at set of sun :

« The breeze will freshen when the day is done.
 « My corslet—cloak—one hour—and we are gone.
 « Sling on thy bugle—see that free from rust,
 « My carbine—lock springs worthy of my trust ;
 « Be the edge sharpened of my boarding-brand,
 « And give its guard more room to fit my hand.
 « This let the Armourer with speed dispose ;
 « Last time it more fatigued my arm than foes :
 « Mark that the signal-gun be duly fired,
 « To tell us when the hour of stay's expired. »

VIII.

They make obeisance, and retire in haste,
 Too soon to seek again the watery waste :
 Yet they repine not—so that Conrad guides,
 And who dare question aught that he decides ?
 That man of loneliness and mystery,
 Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh ;

Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue ;
Still sways their souls with that commanding art
That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.
What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain ?
What should it be ? that thus their fate can bind ?
The power of Thought—the magic of the Mind !
Linked with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will ;
Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,
Makes even their mightiest deeds appear his own.
Such hath it been—shall be—beneath the sun
The many still must labour for the one !
'Tis Nature's doom—but let the wretch who toils,
Accuse not, hate not *him* who wears the spoils.
Oh ! if he knew the weight of splendid chains,
How light the balance of his humbler pains !

IX.

Unlike the heroes of each ancient race,
Demons in act, but gods at least in face,
In Conrad's form seems little to admire,
Though his dark eye-brow shades a glance of fire :
Robust but not Herculean—to the sight
No giant frame sets forth his common height ;
Yet, in the whole, who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men ;
They gaze and marvel how—and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sun burnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale
The sable curls in wild profusion veil ;
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals.

Though smooth his voice, and calm his general mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen :
His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplexed the view,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Worked feelings fearful, and yet undefined ;
Such might it be—that none could truly tell—
Too close enquiry his stern glance would quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye ;
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.
There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear ;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled—and Mercy sighed farewell !

X.

Slight are the outward signs of evil thought,
Within—within—'twas there the spirit wrought !
Love shows all changes—Hate, Ambition, Guile,
Betray no further than the bitter smile ;
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness thrown
Along the governed aspect, speak alone
Of deeper passions ; and to judge their mien,
He, who would see, must be himself unseen.
Then—with the hurried tread, the upward eye,
The clenched hand, the pause of agony,
That listens, starting, lest the step too near
Approach intrusive on that mood of fear :

Then—with each feature working from the heart,
With feelings loosed to strengthen—not depart :
That rise—convulse—contend—that freeze , or glow,
Flush in the cheek, or damp upon the brow ;
Then—Stranger ! if thou canst, and tremblest not,
Behold his soul—the rest that soothes his lot !
Mark—how that lone and blighted bosom sears
The scathing thought of execrated years !
Behold—but who hath seen, or e'er shall see,
Man as himself—the secret spirit free ?

XI.

Yet was not Conrad thus by nature sent
To lead the guilty—guilt's worst instrument—
His soul was changed, before his deeds had driven
Him forth to war with man and forfeit heaven.
Warped by the world in Disappointment's school,
In words too wise, in conduct *there* a fool ;
Too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop,
Doomed by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,
And not the traitors who betrayed him still ;
Nor deemed that gifts bestowed on better men
Had left him joy, and means to give again.
Feared—shunned—belied—ere youth had lost her force,
He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call,
To pay the injuries of some on all.
He knew himself a villain—but he deemed
The rest no better than the thing he seemed ;
And scorned the best as hypocrites who hid
Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.
He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loathed him, crouched and dreaded too.

Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt
From all affection and from all contempt :
His name could sadden, and his acts surprise ;
But they that feared him dared not to despise :
Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
The slumbering venom of the folded snake :
The first may turn—but not avenge the blow ;
The last expires—but leaves no living foe ;
Fast to the doomed offender's form it clings,
And he may crush—not conquer—still it stings !

XII.

None are all evil—quickenings round his heart,
One softer feeling would not yet depart ;
Oft could he sneer at others as beguiled
By passions worthy of a fool or child ,
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he strove,
And even in him it asks the name of Love !
Yes, it was love—unchangeable—unchanged,
Felt but for one from whom he never ranged ;
Though fairest captives daily met his eye,
He shunned, nor sought, but coldly passed them by ;
Though many a beauty drooped in prisoned bower,
None ever soothed his most unguarded hour.
Yes—it was Love—if thoughts of tenderness,
Tried in temptation, strengthened by distress,
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet—Oh more than all !—untired by time ;
Which nor defeated hope, nor baffled wile,
Could render sullen were she near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness fret to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent ;
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart ;

Which nought removed, nor menaced to remove—
If there be love in mortals—this was love !
He was a villain—ay—reproaches shower
On him—but not the passion, nor its power,
Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!

XIII.

He paused a moment—till his hastening men
Passed the first winding downward to the glen.
“ Strange tidings !—many a peril have I past,
“ Nor know I why this next appears the last !
“ Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear,
“ Nor shall my followers find me falter here.
“ ’Tis rash to meet, but surer death to wait
“ Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate ;
“ And, if my plan but hold, and Fortune smile,
“ We’ll furnish mourners for our funeral-pile.
“ Ay—let them slumber—peaceful be their dreams !
“ Morn ne’er awoke them with such brilliant beams
“ As kindle high to-night (but blow, thou breeze !)
“ To warm these slow avengers of the seas.
“ Now to Medora—Oh ! my sinking heart,
“ Long may her own be lighter than thou art !
“ Yet was I brave—mean boast where all are brave !
“ Ev’n insects sting for aught they seek to save.
“ This common courage which with brutes we share,
“ That owes its deadliest efforts to despair,
“ Small merit claims—but ’twas my nobler hope
“ To teach my few with numbers still to cope ;
“ Long have I led them—not to vainly bleed :
“ No medium now—we perish or succeed !
“ So let it be—it irks not me to die ;
“ But thus to urge them whence they cannot fly.

« My lot hath long had little of my care,
« But chafes my pride thus baffled in the snare :
« Is this my skill? my craft? to set at last
« Hope, power, and life upon a single cast?
« Oh, Fate!—accuse thy folly, not thy fate—
« She may redeem thee still—nor yet too late.»

XIV.

Thus with himself communion held he, till
He reached the summit of his tower crowned hill.
There at the portal paused—for wild and soft
He heard those accents never heard too oft;
Througl. the high lattice far yet sweet they rung,
And these the notes his bird of beauty sung :

I.

« Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before.

2.

« There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal—but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3

« Remember me—Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline :
The only pang my bosom dare not brave,
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

4.

« My fondest—faintest—latest accents hear :
 Grief for the dead not Virtue can reprove ;
 Then give me all I ever asked—a tear,
 The first—last—sole reward of so much love ! »

He passed the portal—crossed the corridor,
 And reached the chamber as the strain gave o'er :
 « My own Medora ! sure thy song is sad— »

« In Conrad's absence wouldst thou have it glad ?
 « Without thine ear to listen to my lay,
 « Still must my song my thoughts, my soul betray :
 « Still must each accent to my bosom suit,
 « My heart unhushed—although my lips were mute !
 « Oh ! many a night on this lone couch reclined,
 « My dreaming fear with storms hath winged the wind,
 « And deemed the breath that faintly fanned thy sail
 « The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale ;
 « Though soft, it seemed the low prophetic dirge,
 « That mourned thee floating on the savage surge :
 « Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,
 « Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire ;
 « And many a restless night outwatched each star,
 « And morning came—and still thou wert afar.
 « Oh ! how the chill blast on my bosom blew,
 « And day broke dreary on my troubled view,
 « And still I gazed and gazed—and not a prow
 « Was granted to my tears—my truth—my vow !
 « At length—'twas noon—I hailed and blest the mast
 « That met my sight—it neared—Alas ! it past !
 « Another came—Oh God ! 'twas thine at last !

“ Would that those days were over ! wilt thou ne’er,
“ My Conrad ! learn the joys of peace to share ?
“ Sure thou hast more than wealth ; and many a home
“ As bright as this invites us not to roam :
“ Thou know’st it is not peril that I fear,
“ I only tremble when thou art not here ;
“ Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,
“ Which flies from love and languishes for strife—
“ How strange that heart, to me so tender still,
“ Should war with nature and its better will ! ”

“ Yea, strange indeed—that heart hath long been changed ;
“ Worm-like ’twas trampled—adder-like avenged,
“ Without one hope on earth beyond thy love,
“ And scarce a glimpse of mercy from above.
“ Yet the same feeling which thou dost condemn,
“ My very love to thee is hate to them,
“ So closely mingling here, that disentwined,
“ I cease to love thee when I love mankind.
“ Yet dread not this, the proof of all the past
“ Assures the future that my love will last ;
“ But—Oh, Medora ! nerve thy gentler heart,
“ This hour again—but not for long—we part. ”

“ This hour we part!—my heart foreboded this :
“ Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.
“ This hour—it cannot be—this hour away !
“ Yon bark hath hardly anchored in the bay :
“ Her consort still is absent, and her crew
“ Have need of rest before they toil anew ;
“ My love ! thou mock’st my weakness ; and would’st steel
“ My breast before the time when it must feel ;
“ But trifle now no more with my distress,
“ Such mirth hath less of play than bitterness.

« Be silent, Conrad!—dearest! come and share
« The feast these hands delighted to prepare;
« Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
« See, I have plucked the fruit that promised best,
« And where not sure, perplexed, but pleased, I guessed
« At such as seemed the fairest: thrice the hill
« My steps have wound to try the coolest rill;
« Yes! thy sherbet to-night will sweetly flow,
« See how it sparkles in its vase of snow!
« The grapes' gay juice thy bosom never cheers;
« Thou more than Moslem when the cup appears:
« Think not I mean to chide—for I rejoice
« What others deem a penance is thy choice.
« But come, the board is spread; our silver lamp
« Is trimmed, and heeds not the Sirocco's damp:
« Then shall my handmaids while the time along,
« And join with me the dance, or wake the song;
« Or my guitar, which still thou lov'st to hear,
« Shall soothe or lull—or, should it vex thine ear,
« We'll turn the tale, by Ariosto told,
« Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.
« Why—thou wert worse than he who broke his vow
« To that lost damsel, shouldst thou leave me now;
« Or even that traitor chief—I've seen thee smile,
« When the clear sky showed Ariadne's isle,
« Which I have pointed from these cliffs the while:
« And thus, half sportive, half in fear, I said,
« Lest Time should raise that doubt to more than dread,
« Thus Conrad, too, will quit me for the main:
« And he deceived me—for—he came again!»

« Again—again—and oft again—my love!
« If there be life below, and hope above,

« He will return—but now, the moments bring
« The time of parting with redoubled wing :
« The why—the where—what boots it now to tell?
« Since all must end in that wild word—farewell !
« Yet would I fain—did time allow—disclose—
« Fear not—these are no formidable foes ;
« And here shall watch a more than wonted guard,
« For sudden siege and long defence prepared :
« Nor be thou lonely—though thy lord's away,
« Our matrons and thy handmaids with thee stay ;
« And this thy comfort—that, when next we meet,
« Security shall make repose more sweet :
« List !—'tis the bugle—Juan shrilly blew—
« One kiss—one more—another—Oh ! adieu ! »

She rose—she sprung—she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face.
He dared not raise to his that deep-blue eye,
Which downcast drooped in tearless agony.
Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his arms,
In all the wildness of dishevelled charms ;
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt
So full—*that* feeling seemed almost unfelt !
Hark—peals the thunder of the signal-gun !
It told 'twas sunset—and he cursed that sun.
Again—again—that form he madly pressed,
Which mutely clasped, imploringly caressed !
And tottering to the couch his bride he bore,
One moment gazed—as if to gaze no more ;
Felt—that for him earth held but her alone,
Kissed her cold forehead—turned—is Conrad gone ?

XV.

« And is he gone? »—on sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude?
« 'Twas but an instant past—and here he stood!
« And now »—without the portal's porch she rushed,
And then at length her tears in freedom gushed;
Big—bright—and fast, unknown to her they fell;
But still her lips refused to send—« Farewell! »
For in that word—that fatal word—howe'er
We promise—hope—believe—there breathes despair.
O'er every feature of that still, pale face,
Had sorrow fixed what time can ne'er erase:
The tender blue of that large loving eye
Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy,
Till—Oh, how far!—it caught a glimpse of him,
And then it flowed—and phrenzied seemed to swim
Through those long, dark, and glistening lashes dewed
With drops of sadness oft to be renewed.
« He's gone! »—against her heart that hand is driven,
Convulsed and quick—then gently raised to heaven;
She looked and saw the heaving of the main;
The white sail set—she dared not look again,
But turned with sickening soul within the gate—
« It is no dream—and I am desolate! »

XVI.

From crag to crag descending—swiftly sped
Stern Conrad down, nor once he turned his head;
But shrunk whene'er the windings of his way
Forced on his eye what he would not survey,
His lone, but lovely dwelling on the steep,
That hailed him first when homeward from the deep:

And she—the dim and melancholy star,
Whose ray of beauty reached him from afar,
On her he must not gaze, he must not think,
There he might rest—but on Destruction's brink :
Yet once almost he stopped—and nearly gave
His fate to chance, his projects to the wave ;
But no—it must not be—a worthy chief
May melt, but not betray to woman's grief.
He sees his bark, he notes how fair the wind,
And sternly gathers all his might of mind :
Again he hurries on—and as he hears
The clang of tumult vibrate on his ears,
The busy sounds, the bustle of the shore,
The shout, the signal, and the dashing oar ;
As marks his eye the seaboy on the mast,
The anchor's rise, the sails unfurling fast,
The waving kerchiefs of the crowd that urge
That mute adieu to those who stem the surge ;
And more than all, his blood-red flag aloft,
He marvelled how his heart could seem so soft.
Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast,
He feels of all his former self possest ;
He bounds—he flies—until his footsteps reach
The verge where ends the cliff, begins the beach,
There checks his speed ; but pauses less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew ;
Nor rush, disturbed by haste, to vulgar view :
For well had Conrad learned to curb the crowd,
By arts that veil, and oft preserve the proud ;
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight—and awes if seen
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy ;

All these he wielded to command assent :
 But where he wished to win, so well unbent,
 That kindness cancelled fear in those who heard,
 And other's gifts shewed mean beside his word,
 When echoed to the heart as from his own
 His deep yet tender melody of tone :
 But such was foreign to his wonted mood,
 He cared not what he softened, but subdued ;
 The evil passions of his youth had made
 Him value less who loved—than what obeyed.

XVII.

Around him mustering ranged his ready guard.
 Before him Juan stands—"Are all prepared?"
 "They are—nay more—embarked: the latest boat
 "Waits but my chief ——"
 "My sword, and my capote."
 Soon firmly girded on, and lightly slung,
 His belt and cloak were o'er his shoulders flung;
 "Call Pedro here!" He comes—and Conrad bends,
 With all the courtesy he deigned his friends;
 "Receive these tablets, and peruse with care,
 "Words of high trust and truth are graven there;
 "Double the guard, and when Anselmo's bark
 "Arrives, let him alike these orders mark :
 "In three days (serve the breeze) the sun shall shine
 "On our return—till then all peace be thine!"
 This said, his brother Pirate's hand he wrung,
 Then to his boat with haughty gesture sprung.
 Flashed the dipt oars, and sparkling with the stroke,
 Around the waves' phosphoric² brightness broke;
 They gain the vessel—on the deck he stands;
 Shrieks the shrill whistle—ply the busy hands—

He marks how well the ship her helm obeys,
How gallant all her crew—and deigns to praise.
His eyes of pride to young Gonsalvo turn—
Why doth he start, and inly seem to mourn?
Alas! those eyes beheld his rocky tower,
And live a moment o'er the parting hour;
She—his Medora—did she mark the prow?
Ah! never loved he half so much as now!
But much must yet be done ere dawn of day—
Again he mans himself and turns away;
Down to the cabin with Gonsalvo bends,
And there unfolds his plan—his means—and ends;
Before them burns the lamp, and spreads the chart,
And all that speaks and aids the naval art;
They to the midnight watch protract debate;
To anxious eyes what hour is ever late?
Mean time, the steady breeze serenely blew,
And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew;
Passed the high headlands of each clustering isle,
To gain their port—long—long ere morning smile:
And soon the night-glass through the narrow bay
Discovers where the Pacha's galleys lay.
Count they each sail—and mark how there supine
The lights in vain o'er heedless Moslem shine.
Secure, unnoted, Conrad's prow passed by,
And anchored where his ambush meant to lie;
Screened from espial by the jutting cape,
That rears on high its rude fantastic shape.
Then rose his band to duty—not from sleep—
Equipped for deeds alike on land or deep;
While leaned their leader o'er the fretting flood,
And calmly talked—and yet he talked of blood!

THE CORSAIR.

CANTO II.

« Conosceste i dubiosi desiri? »

DANTE.

I.

IN Coron's bay floats many a galley light,
Through Coron's lattices the lamps are bright,
For Seyd, the Pacha, makes a feast to-night :
A feast for promised triumph yet to come,
When he shall drag the fettered rovers home ;
This hath he sworn by Alla and his sword,
And faithful to his firman and his word,
His summoned prows collect along the coast,
And great the gathering crews, and loud the boast ;
Already shared the captives and the prize,
Though far the distant foe they thus despise ;
'Tis but to sail—no doubt to-morrow's sun
Will see the pirates bound—their haven won !
Mean time the watch may slumber, if they will,
Nor only wake to war, but dreaming kill.
Though all, who can, disperse on shore and seek
To flesh their glowing valour on the Greek ;
How well such deed becomes the turbaned brave—
To bear the sabre's edge before a slave !
Infest his dwelling—but forbear to slay,
Their arms are strong, yet merciful to-day,
And do not deign to smite because they may !

Unless some gay caprice suggest the blow,
To keep in practice for the coming foe.
Revel and rout the evening hours beguile,
And they who wish to wear a head must smile ;
For Moslem mouths produce their choicest cheer,
And hoard their curses, till the coast is clear.

II.

High in his hall reclines the turbaned Seyd ;
Around—the bearded chiefs he came to lead.
Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff—
Forbidden draughts, 'tis said, he dared to quaff,
Though to the rest the sober berry's juice,³
The slaves bear round for rigid Moslem's use ;
The long Chibouque's⁴ dissolving cloud supply,
While dance the Almas⁵ to wild minstrelsy.
The rising morn will view the chief embark ;
But waves are somewhat treacherous in the dark :
And revellers may more securely sleep
On silken couch than o'er the rugged deep ;
Feast there who can—nor combat till they must,
And less to conquest than to Korans trust,
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha's boast.

III.

With cautious reverence, from the outer gate
Slow stalks the slave, whose office there to wait,
Bows his bent head—his hand salutes the floor,
Ere yet his tongue the trusted tidings bore :
« A captive Dervise, from the pirate's nest
« Escaped, is here—himself would tell the rest. »

He took the sign from Seyd's assenting eye,
 And led the holy man in silence nigh.
 His arms were folded on his dark-green vest,
 His step was feeble, and his look deprest ;
 Yet worn he seemed of hardship more than years,
 And pale his cheek with penance, not from fears.
 Vowed to his God—his sable locks he wore,
 And these his lofty cap rose proudly o'er :
 Around his form his loose long robe was thrown,
 And wrapt a breast bestowed on heaven alone ;
 Submissive, yet with self-possession manned,
 He calmly met the curious eyes that scanned ;
 And question of his coming fain would seek,
 Before the Pacha's will allowed to speak.

IV.

« Whence com'st thou, Dervise?

« From the outlaw's den,

« A fugitive—»

« Thy capture where and when ? »

« From Scanalova's port to Scio's isle,

« The saick was bound ; but Alla did not smile

« Upon our course—the Moslem merchant's gains

« The rovers won : our limbs have worn their chains.

« I had no death to fear, nor wealth to boast,

« Beyond the wandering freedom which I lost ;

« At length a fisher's humble boat by night

« Afforded hope, and offered chance of flight :

« I seized the hour, and find my safety here—

« With thee—most mighty Pacha ! who can fear ? »

« How speed the outlaws ? stand they well prepared,

« Their plundered wealth, and robber's rock, to guard ?

« Dream they of this our preparation, doomed
 « To view with fire their scorpion nest consumed ? »
 « Pacha ! the fettered captive's mourning eye
 « That weeps for flight, but ill can play the spy ;
 « I only heard the reckless waters roar,
 « Those waves that would not bear me from the shore ;
 « I only marked the glorious sun and sky,
 « Too bright—too blue—for my captivity ;
 « And felt—that all which Freedom's bosom cheers
 « Must break my chain before it dried my tears.
 « This may'st thou judge, at least, from my escape,
 « They little deem of aught in peril's shape ;
 « Else vainly had I prayed or sought the chance
 « That leads me here—if eyed with vigilance :
 « The careless guard that did not see me fly,
 « May watch as idly when thy power is nigh :
 « Pacha !—my limbs are faint—and nature craves
 « Food for my hunger, rest from tossing waves ;
 « Permit my absence—peace be with thee ! Peace
 « With all around !—now grant repose—release. »

« Stay, Dervise ! I have more to question—stay,
 « I do command thee—sit—dost hear ?—obey !
 « More I must ask, and food the slaves shall bring ;
 « Thou shalt not pine where all are banqueting :
 « The supper done—prepare thee to reply,
 « Clearly and full—I love not mystery. »

'Twere vain to guess what shook the pious man,
 Who looked not lovingly on that Divan,
 Nor showed high relish for the banquet prest,
 And less respect for every fellow guest.
 'Twas but a moment's peevish hectic past
 Along his cheek, and tranquillized as fast :

He sate him down in silence, and his look
Resumed the calmness which before forsook:
The feast was ushered in—but sumptuous fare
He shunned as if some poison mingled there.
For one so long condemned to toil and fast,
Methinks he strangely spares the rich repast.

“ What ails thee, Dervise? eat—dost thou suppose
“ This feast a Christian’s? or my friends thy foes?
“ Why dost thou shun the salt? that sacred pledge,
“ Which, once partaken, blunts the sabre’s edge,
“ Makes even contending tribes in peace unite,
“ And hated hosts seem brethren to the sight! ”

“ Salt seasons dainties—and my food is still
“ The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill;
“ And my stern vow and order’s ⁶ laws oppose
“ To break or mingle bread with friends or foes;
“ It may seem strange—if there be aught to dread,
“ That peril rests upon my single head;
“ But for thy sway—nay more—thy Sultan’s throne,
“ I taste nor bread nor banquet—save alone;
“ Infringed our order’s rule, the Prophet’s rage
“ To Mecca’s dome might bar my pilgrimage. ”

“ Well—as thou wilt—ascetic as thou art—
“ One question answer; then in peace depart.
“ How many?—Ha! it cannot sure be day?
“ What star—what sun is bursting on the bay?
“ It shines a lake of fire!—away—away!
“ Ho! treachery! my guards! my scimitar!
“ The galleys feed the flames—and I afar!
“ Accursed Dervise!—these thy tidings—thou
“ Some villain spy—seize—cleave him—slay him now! ”

Up rose the Dervise with that burst of light,
Nor less his change of form appalled the sight :
Up rose that Dervise—not in saintly garb,
But like a warrior bounding on his barb,
Dashed his high cap, and tore his robe away—
Shone his mailed breast, and flashed his sabre's ray !
His close but glittering casque, and sable plume,
More glittering eye, and black brow's sabler gloom,
Glared on the Moslem's eyes some afrit sprite,
Whose demon death-blow left no hope for fight.
The wild confusion, and the swarthy glow
Of flames on high, and torches from below ;
The shriek of terror, and the mingling yell—
For swords began to clash, and shouts to swell,
Flung o'er that spot of earth the air of hell !
Distracted, to and fro, the flying slaves
Behold but bloody shore and fiery waves ;
Nought heeded they the Pacha's angry cry,
They seize that Dervise ! seize on Zatanai !
He saw their terror—checked the first despair
That urged him but to stand and perish there,
Since far too early and too well obeyed,
The flame was kindled ere the signal made ;
He saw their terror—from his baldric drew
His bugle—brief the blast—but shrilly blew,
'Tis answered—« Well ye speed, my gallant crew !
« Why did I doubt their quickness of career ?
« And deem design had left me single here ? »
Sweeps his long arm—that sabre's whirling sway,
Sheds fast atonement for its first delay ;
Completes his fury, what their fear begun,
And makes the many basely quail to one.
The cloven turbans o'er the chamber spread,
And scarce an arm dare rise to guard its head :

Even Seyd, convulsed, o'erwhelmed with rage, surprise,
Retreats before him, though he still defies.
No craven he—and yet he dreads the blow,
So much Confusion magnifies his foe!
His blazing galleys still distract his sight,
He tore his beard, and foaming fled the fight;⁸
For now the pirates passed the Haram gate,
And burst within—and it were death to wait;
Where wild Amazement shrieking—kneeling—throws
The sword aside—in vain—the blood o'erflows!
The Corsairs pouring, haste to where within,
Invited Conrad's bugle, and the din
Of groaning victims, and wild cries for life,
Proclaimed how well he did the work of strife.
They shout to find him grim and lonely there,
A glutted tyger mangling in his lair!
But short their greeting—shorter his reply—
« 'Tis well—but Seyd escapes—and he must die.
« Much hath been done—but more remains to do—
« Their galleys blaze—why not their city too? »

V.

Quick at the word—they seized him each a torch,
And fire the dome from minaret to porch.
A stern delight was fixed in Conrad's eye,
But sudden sunk—for on his ear the cry
Of women struck, and like a deadly knell
Knocked at that heart unmoved by battle's yell.
« Oh! burst the Haram—wrong not on your lives
« One female form—remember—we have wives.
« On them such outrage Vengeance will repay;
« Man is our foe, and such 'tis ours to slay:

« But still we spared—must spare the weaker prey.
« Oh! I forgot—but Heaven will not forgive
« If at my word the helpless cease to live;
« Follow who will—I go—we yet have time
« Our souls to lighten of at least a crime. »
He climbs the crackling stair—he bursts the door,
Nor feels his feet glow scorching with the floor;
His breath choaked gasping with the volumed smoke,
But still from room to room his way he broke.
They search—they find—they save: with lusty arms
Each bears a prize of unregarded charms;
Calm their loud fears; sustain their sinking frames
With all the care defenceless beauty claims:
So well could Conrad tame their fiercest mood,
And check the very hands with gore imbrued.
But who is she? whom Conrad's arms convey
From reeking pile and combat's wreck—away—
Who but the love of him he dooms to bleed?
The Haram queen—but still the slave of Seyd!

VI.

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare,⁹
Few words to reassure the trembling fair;
For in that pause compassion snatched from war,
The foe before retiring, fast and far,
With wonder saw their footsteps unpursued,
First slower fled—then rallied—then withstood.
This Seyd perceives, then first perceives how few,
Compared with his, the Corsair's roving crew,
And blushes o'er his error, as he eyes
The ruin wrought by panic and surprise.
Alla il Alla! Vengeance swells the cry—
Shame mounts to rage that must atone or die!

And flame for flame, and blood for blood must tell,
The tide of triumph ebbs that flowed too well—
When wrath returns to renovated strife,
And those who fought for conquest strike for life.
Conrad beheld the danger—he beheld
His followers faint by freshening foes repelled :
« One effort—one—to breake the circling host ! »
They form—unite—charge—waver—all is lost !
Within a narrower ring compressed, beset,
Hopeless, not heartless, strive and struggle yet—
Ah ! now they fight in firmest file no more,
Hemmed in—cut off—cleft down—and trampled o'er ;
But each strikes singly, silently, and home,
And sinks outwearied rather than o'ercome,
His last faint quittance rendering with his breath,
Till the blade glimmers in the grasp of death !

VII.

But first, ere came the rallying host to blows,
And rank to rank, and hand to hand oppose,
Gulnare and all her Haram handmaids freed,
Safe in the dome of one who held their creed,
By Conrad's mandate safely were bestowed,
And dried those tears for life and fame that flowed :
And when that dark-eyed lady, young Gulnare,
Recalled those thoughts late wandering in despair,
Much did she marvel o'er the courtesy
That smoothed his accents ; softened in his eye :
'Twas strange—*that* robber thus with gore bedewed,
Seemed gentler then than Seyd in fondest mood.
The Pacha wooed as if he deemed the slave
Must seem delighted with the heart he gave ;
The Corsair vowed protection, soothed affright,
As if his homage were a woman's right.

“ The wish is wrong—nay worse for female—vain :
“ Yet much I long to view that chief again ;
“ If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
“ The life—my loving lord remembered not ! ”

VIII.

And him she saw, where thickest carnage spread,
But gathered breathing from the happier dead ;
Far from his band, and battling with a host
That deem right dearly won the field he lost,
Felled—bleeding—baffled of the death he sought,
And snatched to expiate all the ills he wrought ;
Preserved to linger and to live in vain,
While Vengeance pondered o’er new plans of pain,
And staunched the blood she saves to shed again—
But drop by drop, for Seyd’s unglutted eye
Would doom him ever dying—ne’er to die !
Can this be he ? triumphant late she saw,
When his red hand’s wild gesture waved, a law !
’Tis he indeed—disarmed but undeprest,
His sole regret the life he still possest ;
His wounds too slight, though taken with that will,
Which would have kissed the hand that then could kill.
Oh were there none, of all the many given,
To send his soul—he scarcely asked to heaven ?
Must he alone of all retain his breath,
Who more than all had striv’n and struck for death ?
He deeply felt—what mortal hearts must feel,
When thus reversed on faithless fortune’s wheel,
For crimes committed, and the victor’s threat
Of lingering tortures to repay the debt
He deeply, darkly felt ; but evil pride
That led to perpetrate—now serves to hide.

Still in his stern and self-collected mien
A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen,
Though faint with wasting toil and stiffening wound,
But few that saw—so calmly gazed around :
Though the far shouting of the distant crowd,
Their tremors o'er, rose insolently loud,
The better warriors who beheld him near,
Insulted not the foe who taught them fear ;
And the grim guards that to his durance led,
In silence eyed him with a secret dread.

IX.

The leech was sent—but not in mercy—there
To note how much the life yet left could bear ;
He found enough to load with heaviest chain,
And promise feeling for the wrench of pain :
To-morrow—yea—to-morrow's evening sun
Will sinking see impalement's pangs begun,
And rising with the wonted blush of morn
Behold how well and ill those pangs are borne.
Of torments this the longest and the worst,
Which adds all other agony to thirst,
That day by day death still forbears to slake,
While famished vultures flit around the stake.
« Oh ! water—water ! »—smiling Hate denies
The victim's prayer—for if he drinks—he dies.
This was his doom.—The leech, the guard were gone,
And left proud Conrad fettered and alone.

X.

'Twere vain to paint to what his feelings grew—
It even were doubtful if their victim knew.

There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
When all its elements convulsed—combined—
Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
And gnashing with impenitent Remorse ;
That juggling fiend—who never spake before—
But cries, « I warned thee ! » when the deed is o'er.
Vain voice ! the spirit burning but unbent,
May writhe—rebel—the weak alone repent !
Even in that lonely hour when most it feels,
And, to itself, all—all that self reveals,
No single passion, and no ruling thought,
That leaves the rest as once unseen, unsought ;
But the wild prospect when the soul reviews—
All rushing through their thousand avenues.
Ambition's dreams expiring, love's regret,
Endanger'd glory, life itself beset ;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate
'Gainst those who fain would triumph in our fate ;
The hopeless past—the hasting future driven
Too quickly on to guess if hell or heaven ;
Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps remembered not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot ;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern reflection each a crime ;
The withering sense of evil unrevealed,
Not cankering less because the more concealed—
All, in a word, from which all eyes must start,
That opening sepulchre—the naked heart
Bares with its buried woes, till Pride awake,
To snatch the mirror from the soul—and break.
Ay—Pride can veil, and Courage brave it all—
All—all—before—beyond—the deadliest fall.
Each hath some fear, and he who least betrays,
The only hypocrite deserving praise :

Not the loud recreant wretch who boasts and flies ;
But he who looks on death—and silent dies.
So steel'd by pondering o'er his far career,
He halfway meets him should he menace near !

XI.

In the high chamber of his highest tower,
Sate Conrad, fettered in the Pacha's power.
His palace perished in the flame—this fort
Contained at once his captive and his court.
Not much could Conrad of his sentence blame,
His foe, if vanquished, had but shared the same :—
Alone he sate—in solitude had scanned
His guilty bosom, but that breast he manned :
One thought alone he could not—dared not meet.
« Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet ? »
Then—only then—his clanking hands he raised,
And strained with rage the chain on which he gazed ;
But soon he found—or feigned—or dreamed relief,
And smiled in self-derision of his grief,
« And now come torture when it will—or may,
« More need of rest to nerve me for the day ! »
This said, with languor to his mat he crept,
And, whatsoe'er his visions, quickly slept.

'Twas hardly midnight when that fray begun,
For Conrad's plans matured at once were done ;
And Havoc loathes so much the waste of time,
She scarce had left an uncommitted crime.
One hour beheld him since the tide he stemmed—
Disguised—discovered—conquering—ta'en—condemned—
A chief on land—an outlaw on the deep—
Destroying—saving—prisoned—and asleep !

XII.

He slept in calmest sleeping—for his breath
Was hushed so deep—Ah! happy if in death!
He slept—Who o'er his placid slumber bends?
His foes are gone—and here he hath no friends;
It is some seraph sent to grant him grace?
No, 'tis an earthly form with heavenly face!
Its white arm raised a lamp—yet gently hid,
Lest the ray flash abruptly on the lid
Of that closed eye, which opens but to pain,
And once unclosed—but once may close again.
That form, with eye so dark, and cheek so fair,
And auburn waves of gemmed and braided hair;
With shape of fairy lightness—naked foot,
That shines like snow, and falls on earth as mute—
Through guards and dunest night how came it there?
Ah! rather ask what will not woman dare?
Whom youth and pity lead like thee, Gulnare!
She could not sleep—and while the Pacha's rest
In muttering dreams yet saw his pirate-guest,
She left his side—his signet-ring she bore,
Which oft in sport adorned her hand before—
And with it, scarcely questioned, won her way
Through drowsy guards that must that sign obey.
Worn out with toil, and tired with changing blows,
Their eyes had envied Conrad his repose;
And chill and nodding at the turret door,
They stretch their listless limbs, and watch no more:
Just raised their heads to hail the signet-ring,
Nor ask or what or who the sign may bring.

XIII.

She gazed in wonder, « Can he calmly sleep,
« While other eyes his fall or ravage weep ?
« And mine in restlessness are wandering here—
« What sudden spell hath made this man so dear.
« True—'tis to him my life, and more, I owe,
« And me and mine he spared from worse than woe :
« 'Tis late to think—but soft—his slumber breaks—
« How heavily he sighs!—he starts—awakes ! »

He raised his head—and dazzled with the light,
His eye seemed dubious if it saw aright :

He moved his hand—the grating of his chain
Too harshly told him that he lived again.

« What is that form ? if not a shape of air,
« Methinks my jailor's face shows wond'rous fair ! »

« Pirate ! thou know'st me not—but I am one
« Grateful for deeds thou hast too rarely done ;
« Look on me—and remember her, thy hand
« Snatched from the flames, and thy more fearful band.
« I come through darkness—and I scarce know why—
« Yet not to hurt—I would not see thee die. »

« If so, kind lady ! thine the only eye
« That would not here in that gay hope delight :
« Theirs is the chance—and let them use their right.
« But still I thank their courtesy or thine,
« That would confess me at so fair a shrine ! »

Strange though it seem—yet with extremest grief
Is linked a mirth—it doth not bring relief—
That playfulness of sorrow ne'er beguiles,
And smiles in bitterness—but still it smiles ;

And sometimes with the wisest and the best,
 Till even the scaffold¹⁰ echoes with their jest!
 Yet not the joy to which it seems akin—
 It may deceive all hearts, save that within.
 Whate'er it was that flashed on Conrad, now
 A laughing wildness half unbent his brow:
 And these his accents had a sound of mirth,
 As if the last he could enjoy on earth;
 Yet 'gainst his nature—for through that short life,
 Few thoughts had he to spare from gloom and strife.

XIV.

« Corsair! thy doom is named—but I have power
 « To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour.
 « Thee would I spare—nay more—would save thee now,
 « But this—time—hope—nor even thy strength allow;
 « But all I can, I will: at least, delay
 « The sentence that remits thee scarce a day.
 « More now were ruin—even thyself were loth
 « The vain attempt should bring but doom to both. »

« Yes!—loth indeed:—my soul is nerved to all,
 « Or fall'n too low to fear a further fall:
 « Tempt not thyself with peril, me with hope,
 « Of flight from foes with whom I could not cope;
 « Unfit to vanquish—shall I meanly fly,
 « The one of all my band that would not die?
 « Yet there is one—to whom my memory clings,
 « 'Till to these eyes her own wild softness springs.
 « My sole resources in the path I trod
 « Were these—my bark—my sword—my love—my God!
 « The last I left in youth—he leaves me now—
 « And man but works his will to lay me low.

« I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
« Wrung from the coward crouching of despair ;
« It is enough—I breathe—and I can bear.
« My sword is shaken from the worthless hand
« That might have better kept so true a brand ;
« My bark is sunk or captive—but my love—
« For her in sooth my voice would mount above :
« Oh ! she is all that still to earth can bind—
« And this will break a heart so more than kind,
« And blight a form—till thine appeared, Gulnare !
« Mine eye ne'er asked if others were as fair ? »

« Thou lov'st another then ?—but what to me
« Is this—'tis nothing—nothing e'er can be :
« But yet—thou lov'st—and——Oh ! I envy those
« Whose hearts on hearts as faithful can repose,
« Who never feel the void—the wandering thought
« That sighs o'er visions—such as mine hath wrought. »
« Lady—methought thy love was his, for whom
« This arm redeemed thee from a fiery tomb. »

« My love stern Seyd's ! Oh—No—No—not my love—
« Yet much this heart, that strives no more, once strove
« To meet his passion—but it would not be.
« I felt—I feel—love dwells with—with the free.
« I am a slave, a favoured slave at best,
« To share his splendour, and seem very blest !
« Oft must my soul the question undergo,
« Of—' Dost thou love ? ' and burn to answer ' No ! '
« Oh ! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
« And struggle not to feel averse in vain ;
« But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
« And hide from one—perhaps another there.

« He takes the hand I give not—nor withhold—
 « Its pulse nor checked—nor quickened—calmly cold :
 « And when resigned, it drops a lifeless weight
 « From one I never loved enough to hate.
 « No warmth these lips return by his imprest,
 « And chilled remembrance shudders o'er the rest.
 « Yes—had I ever proved that passion's zeal,
 « The change to hatred were at least to feel :
 « But still—he goes unmourned—returns unsought—
 « And oft when present—absent from my thought.
 « Or when reflection comes, and come it must—
 « I fear that henceforth 'twill but bring disgust ;
 « I am his slave—but, in despite of pride,
 « 'Twere worse than bondage to become his bride.
 « Oh ! that this dotage of his breast would cease !
 « Or seek another and give mine release,
 « But yesterday—I could have said, to peace !
 « Yes—if unwonted fondness now I feign,
 « Remember—captive ! 'tis to break thy chain.
 « Repay the life that to thy hand I owe ;
 « To give thee back to all endeared below,
 « Who share such love as I can never know.
 « Farewell—morn breaks—and I must now away :
 « 'Twill cost me dear—but dread not death to-day ! »

XV.

She pressed his fettered fingers to her heart,
 And bowed her head, and turned her to depart,
 And noiseless as a lovely dream is gone.
 And was she here ? and is he now alone ?
 What gem hath dropped and sparkles o'er his chain ?
 The tear most sacred—shed for other's pain—
 That starts at once—bright—pure—from Pity's mine,
 Already polished by the hand divine !

Oh! too convincing—dangerously dear—
 In woman's eye the unanswerable tear!
 That weapon of her weakness she can wield,
 To save—subdue—at once her spear and shield—
 Avoid it—Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,
 Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!
 What lost a world, and bade a hero fly?
 The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.
 Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven,
 By this—how many lose not earth—but heaven!
 Consign their souls to man's eternal foe,
 And seal their own to spare some wanton's woe!

XVI.

'Tis morn—and o'er his altered features play
 The beams—without the hope of yesterday—
 What shall he be ere night? perchance a thing
 O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing:
 By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt,
 While sets that sun, and dew's of evening melt,
 Chill—wet—and misty round each stiffened limb,
 Refreshing earth—reviving all but him!

END OF CANTO II.

THE CORSAIR.

CANTO III.

« Come vedi—ancor non m'abbandona! »

DANTE.

I.

SLOW sinks, more lovely ere his race he run,
 Along Morea's hills the setting sun ;
 Not, as in Northern climes obscurely bright,
 But one unclouded blaze of living light !
 O'er the hushed deep the yellow beam he throws,
 Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it glows.
 On old Ægina's rock, and Idra's isle,
 The god of gladness sheds his parting smile ;
 O'er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
 Though there his altars are no more divine.
 Descending fast the mountain shadows kiss
 The glorious gulph, unconquered Salamis !
 Their azure arches through the long expanse
 More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
 And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
 Mark his gay course and own the hues of heaven ;
 Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
 Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve, his palest beam he cast,
 When—Athens ! here thy Wisest looked his last.

How watched thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murdered sage's¹¹ latest day!
Not yet—not yet—Sol pauses on the hill—
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonizing eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes:
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seemed to pour,
The land where Phœbus never frowned before,
But ere he sunk below Cithæron's head,
The cup of woe was quaffed—the spirit fled;
The soul of him who scorned to fear or fly—
Who lived and died, as none can live or die!

But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The queen of night asserts her silent reign.¹²
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, nor girds her glowing form;
With cornice glimmering as the moon-beams play,
There the white column greets her grateful ray,
And bright around with quivering beams beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret:
The groves of olive scattered dark and wide
Where meek Cephissus pours his scanty tide,
The cypress saddening by the sacred mosque,
The gleaming turret of the gay Kiosk,¹³
And, dun and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane yon solitary palm,
All tinged with varied hues arrest the eye—
And dull were his that passed them heedless by.

Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war;
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long array of sapphire and of gold,

Mixt with the shades of many a distant isle,
That frown—where gentler Ocean seems to smile.¹⁴

II.

Not now my theme—why turn my thoughts to thee?
Oh! who can look along thy native sea,
Nor dwell upon thy name, whate'er the tale,
So much its magic must o'er all prevail?
Who that beheld that sun upon thee set,
Fair Athens! could thine evening face forget?
Not he—whose heart nor time nor distance frees,
Spell-bound within the clustering Cyclades!
Nor seems this homage foreign to his strain,
His Corsair's isle was once thine own domain—
Would that with freedom it were thine again!

III.

The sun hath sunk—and, darker than the night,
Sinks with his beam upon the beacon height—
Medora's heart—the third day's come and gone—
With it he comes not—sends not—faithless one!
The wind was fair though light, and storms were none.
Last eve Anselmo's bark returned, and yet
His only tidings that they had not met!
Though wild, as now, far different were the tale
Had Conrad waited for that single sail.

The night-breeze freshens—she that day had past
In watching all that Hope proclaimed a mast;
Sadly she sate—on high—Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore,
And there she wandered heedless of the spray
That dashed her garments oft, and warned away:

She saw not—felt not this—nor dared depart,
Nor deemed it cold—her chill was at her heart ;
Till grew such certainty from that suspense—
His very sight had shocked from life or sense !

It came at last—a sad and shattered boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first they sought ;
Some bleeding—all most wretched—these the few—
Scarce knew they how escaped—*this* all they knew.
In silence, darkling, each appeared to wait
His fellow's mournful guess at Conrad's fate :
Something they would have said ; but seemed to fear
To trust their accents to Medora's ear.

She saw at once, yet sunk not—trembled not—
Beneath that grief, that loneliness of lot—
Within that meek fair form, were feelings high,
That deemed not till they found their energy.
While yet was Hope—they softened—fluttered—wept—
All lost—that softness died not—but it slept ;
And o'er its slumber rose that Strength which said,
« With nothing left to love—there's nought to dread. »
Tis more than nature's ; like the burning night
Delirium gathers from the fever's height.

« Silent you stand—nor would I hear you tell
« What—speak not—breathe not—for I know it well—
« Yet would I ask—almost my lip denies
« The—quick your answer—tell me where he lies ? »

« Lady ! we know not—scarce with life we fled ;
« But here is one denies that he is dead :
« He saw him bound, and bleeding—but alive. »

She heard no further—'twas in vain to strive—

So throbb'd each vein—each thought—till then withstood;
Her own dark soul—these words at once subdued—
She totters—falls—and senseless had the wave
Perchance but snatched her from another grave;
But that with hands though rude, yet weeping eyes,
They yield such aid as Pity's haste supplies:
Dash o'er her deathlike cheek the Ocean dew,
Raise—fan—sustain—till life returns anew;
Awake her handmaids, with the matrons leave
That fainting form o'er which they gaze and grieve;
Then seek Anselmo's cavern, to report
The tale too tedious—when the triumph short.

IV.

In that wild council words waxed warm and strange,
With thoughts of ransom, rescue, and revenge;
All, save repose or flight—still lingering there
Breathed Conrad's spirit, and forbade despair;
Whate'er his fate—the breasts he formed and led,
Will save him living, or appease him dead.
Woe to his foes! there yet survive a few,
Whose deeds are daring as their hearts are true.

V.

Within the Haram's secret chamber sate
Stern Seyd, still pondering o'er his Captive's fate;
His thoughts on love and hate alternate dwell,
Now with Gulnare, and now in Conrad's cell;
Here at his feet the lovely slave reclined
Surveys his brow—would soothe his gloom of mind,
While many an anxious glance her large dark eye
Sends in its idle search for sympathy,
His only bends in seeming o'er his beads,¹⁵
But inly views his victim as he bleeds.

« Pacha! the day is thine; and on thy crest
« Sits Triumph—Conrad taken—fall'n the rest!
« His doom is fixed—he dies—and well his fate
« Was earned—yet much too worthless for thy hate:
« Methinks, a short release for ransom told
« With all his treasure, not unwisely sold;
« Report speaks largely of his pirate-hoard—
« Would that of this my Pacha were the Lord!
« While baffled—weakened by this fatal fray—
« Watched—followed—he were then an easier prey;
« But once cut off—the remnant of his band
« Embark their wealth, and seek a safer strand.»

« Gulnare!—if for each drop of blood a gem
« Were offered rich as Stamboul's diadem;
« If for each hair of his a massy mine
« Of virgin ore should supplicating shine;
« If all our arab tales divulge or dream
« Of wealth were here—that gold should not redeem!
« It had not now redeemed a single hour—
« But that I know him fettered, in my power;
« And, thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
« On pangs that longest rack, and latest kill.»

« Nay, Seyd!—I seek not to restrain thy rage,
« Too justly moved for mercy to assuage;
« My thoughts were only to secure for thee
« His riches—thus released, he were not free:
« Disabled, shorn of half his might and band,
« His capture could but wait thy first command.»

« His capture *could*!—and shall I then resign
« One day to him—the wretch already mine?
« Release my foe!—at whose remonstrance?—thine!

« Fair suitor!—to thy virtuous gratitude,
 « That thus repays this Giaour's relenting mood,
 « Which thee and thine alone of all could spare,
 « No doubt—regardless if the prize were fair,
 « My thanks and praise alike are due—now hear!
 « I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
 « I do mistrust thee, woman! and each word
 « Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard.
 « Borne in his arms through fire from yon Serai—
 « Say, wert thou lingering there with him to fly?
 « Thou need'st not answer—thy confession speaks,
 « Already reddening on thy guilty cheeks;
 « Then, lovely dame, bethink thee! and beware:
 « 'Tis not *his* life alone may claim such care!
 « Another word and—nay—I need no more.
 « Accursed was the moment when he bore
 « Thee from the flames, which better far—but—no—
 « I then had mourned thee with a lover's woe—
 « Now 'tis thy lord that warns—deceitful thing!
 « Know'st thou that I can clip thy wanton wing?
 « In words alone I am not wont to chafe:
 « Look to thyself—nor deem thy falsehood safe!

He rose—and slowly, sternly thence withdrew,
 Rage in his eye and threats in his adieu:
 Ah! little recked that chief of womanhood—
 Which frowns ne'er quelled, nor menaces subdued;
 And little deemed he what thy heart, Gulnare!
 When soft could feel, and when incensed could dare.
 His doubts appeared to wrong—nor yet she knew
 How deep the root from whence compassion grew—
 She was a slave—from such may captives claim
 A fellow-feeling, differing but in name;

Still half unconscious—heedless of his wrath,
Again she ventured on the dangerous path,
Again his rage repelled—until arose
That strife of thought, the source of woman's woes!

VI.

Meanwhile—long anxious—wearied—still—the same
Rolled day and night—his soul could terror tame—
This fearful interval of doubt and dread,
When every hour might doom him worse than dead,
When every step that echoed by the gate,
Might entering lead where axe and stake await;
When every voice that grated on his ear
Might be the last that he could ever hear;
Could terror tame—that spirit stern and high
Had proved unwilling as unfit to die;
'Twas worn—perhaps decayed—yet silent bore
That conflict deadlier far than all before:
The heat of fight, the hurry of the gale,
Leave scarce one thought inert enough to quail;
But bound and fixed in fettered solitude,
To pine, the prey of every changing mood;
To gaze on thine own heart; and meditate
Irrevocable faults, and coming fate—
Too late the last to shun—the first to mend—
To count the hours that struggle to thine end,
With not a friend to animate, and tell
To other ears that death became thee well;
Around thee foes to forge the ready lie,
And blot life's latest scene with calumny;
Before thee tortures, which the soul can dare,
Yet doubts how well the shrinking flesh may bear;
But deeply feels a single cry would shame,
To valour's praise thy last and dearest claim;

The life thou leav'st below, denied above
By kind monopolists of heavenly love,
And more than doubtful paradise—thy heaven
Of earthly hope—thy loved one from thee riven.
Such were the thoughts that outlaw must sustain,
And govern pangs surpassing mortal pain:
And those sustained he—boots it well or ill?
Since not to sink beneath, is something still!

VII.

The first day passed—he saw not her—Gulnare—
The second—third—and still she came not there;
But what her words avouched, her charms had done,
Or else he had not seen another sun.
The fourth day rolled along, and with the night
Came storm and darkness in their mingling might:
Oh! how he listened to the rushing deep,
That ne'er till now so broke upon his sleep;
And his wild spirit wilder wishes sent,
Roused by the roar of his own element!
Oft had he ridden on that winged wave,
And loved its roughness for the speed it gave;
And now its dashing echoed on his ear,
A long known voice—alas! too vainly near!
Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly loud,
Shook o'er his turret cell the thunder-cloud;
And flashed the lightning by the latticed bar,
To him more genial than the midnight star:
Close to the glimmering grate he dragged his chain,
And hoped *that* peril might not prove in vain.
He raised his iron hand to Heaven, and prayed
One pitying flash to mar the form it made:
His steel and impious prayer attract alike—
The storm rolled onward and disdained to strike;

Its peal waxed fainter—ceased—he felt alone,
As if some faithless friend had spurned his groan!

VIII.

The midnight passed—and to the massy door,
A light step came—it paused—it moved once more;
Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key:
'Tis as his heart foreboded—that fair she!
Whate'er her sins, to him a guardian saint,
And beauteous still as hermit's hope can paint;
Yet changed since last within that cell she came,
More pale her cheek, more tremulous her frame:
On him she cast her dark and hurried eye,
Which spoke before her accents—"thou must die!"
"Yes, thou must die—there is but one resource,
"The last—the worst—if torture were not worse."

"Lady! I look to none—my lips proclaim
"What last proclaimed they—Conrad still the same?
"Why should'st thou seek an outlaw's life to spare,
"And change the sentence I deserve to bear?
"Well have I earned—nor here alone—the meed
"Of Seyd's revenge, by many a lawless deed."
"Why should I seek? because—Oh! didst thou not
"Redeem my life from worse than slavery's lot?
"Why should I seek?—hath misery made thee blind
"To the fond workings of a woman's mind!
"And must I say? albeit my heart rebel
"With all that woman feels, but should not tell—
"Because—despite thy crimes—that heart is moved:
"It feared thee—thanked thee—pitied—maddened—loved.
"Reply not, tell not now thy tale again,
"Thou lov'st another—and I love in vain;

« Though fond as mine her bosom, form more fair,
« I rush through peril which she would not dare.
« If that thy heart to hers were truly dear,
« Where I thine own—thou wert not lonely here :
« An outlaw's spouse—and leave her lord to roam !
« What hath such gentle dame to do with home ?
« But speak not now—o'er thine and o'er my head
« Hangs the keen sabre by a single thread ;
« If thou hast courage still, and would'st be free,
« Receive this poignard—rise—and follow me ! »

« Ay—in my chains ! my steps will gently tread,
« With these adornments, o'er each slumbering head !
« Thou hast forgot—is this a garb for flight ?
« Or is that instrument more fit for fight ? »

« Misdoubting Corsair ! I have gained the guard,
« Ripe for revolt, and greedy for reward.
« A single word of mine removes that chain :
« Without some aid how here could I remain ?
« Well, since we met, hath sped my busy time,
« If in aught evil, for thy sake the crime :
« The crime—'tis none to punish those of Seyd—
« That hated tyrant, Conrad—he must bleed !
« I see thee shudder—but my soul is changed—
« Wronged—spurned—reviled—and it shall be avenged—
« Accused of what till now my heart disdained—
« Too faithful, though to bitter bondage chained.
« Yes, smile!—but he had little cause to sneer,
« I was not treacherous then—nor thou too dear :
« But he has said it—and the jealous well,
« Those tyrants, teasing, tempting to rebel,
« Deserve the fate their fretting lips foretell. »

“ I never loved—he bought me—somewhat high—
“ Since with me came a heart he could not buy.
“ I was a slave unmurmuring; he hath said,
“ But for his rescue I with thee had fled.
“ ’Twas false thou know’st—but let such augurs rue,
“ Their words are omens Insult renders true.
“ Nor was thy respite granted to my prayer;
“ This fleeting grace was only to prepare
“ New torments for thy life, and my despair.
“ Mine too he threatens; but his dotage still
“ Would fain reserve me for his lordly will:
“ When wearier of these fleeting charms and me,
“ There yawns the sack—and yonder rolls the sea!
“ What, am I then a toy for dotard’s play,
“ To wear but till the gilding frets away?
“ I saw thee—loved thee—owe thee all—would save,
“ If but to shew how grateful is a slave.
“ But had he not thus menaced fame and life,
“ (And well he keeps his oaths pronounced in strife)
“ I still had saved thee—but the Pacha spared.
“ Now I am all thine own—for all prepared:
“ Thou lov’st me not—nor know’st—or but the worst.
“ Alas! this love—that hatred are the first—
“ Oh! could’st thou prove my truth, thou would’st not start,
“ Nor fear the fire that lights an eastern heart,
“ ’Tis now the beacon of thy safety—now
“ It points within the port a Mainote prow:
“ But in one chamber, where our path must lead,
“ There sleeps—he must not wake—the oppressor Seyd!”
“ Gulnare—Gulnare—I never felt till now
“ My abject fortune, withered fame so low:
“ Seyd is mine enemy: had swept my band
“ From earth with ruthless but with open hand,

« And therefore came I, in my bark of war,
« To smite the smiter with the scimitar ;
« Such is my weapon—not the secret knife—
« Who spares a woman's seeks not slumber's life.
« Thine saved I gladly, lady, not for this—
« Let me not deem that mercy shewn amiss.
« Now fare thee well—more peace be with thy breast !
« Night wears apace—my last of earthly rest ! »

« Rest ! Rest ! by sunrise must thy sinews shake,
« And thy limbs writhe around the ready stake.
« I heard the order—saw—I will not see—
« If thou wilt perish, I will fall with thee.
« My life—my love—my hatred—all below
« Are on this cast—Corsair ! 'tis but a blow !
« Without it flight were idle—how evade
« His sure pursuit ? my wrongs too unrepaid,
« My youth disgraced—the long—long wasted years,
« One blow shall cancel with our future fears ;
« But since the dagger suits thee less than brand,
« I'll try the firmness of a female hand—
« The guards are gained—one moment all were o'er—
« Corsair ! we meet in safety or no more ;
« If errs my feeble hand, the morning cloud
« Will hover o'er thy scaffold, and my shroud. »

IX.

She turned, and vanished ere he could reply,
But his glance followed far with eager eye,
And gathering, as he could, the links that bound
His form, to curl their length, and curb their sound,
Since bar and bolt no more his steps preclude,
He, fast as fettered limbs allow, pursued.

'Twas dark and winding, and he knew not where
That passage led—nor lamp nor guard were there :
He sees a dusky glimmering—shall he seek
Or shun that ray so indistinct and weak ?
Chance guides his steps—a freshness seems to bear
Full on his brow, as if from morning air—
He reached an open gallery—on his eye
Gleamed the last star of night, the clearing sky :
Yet scarcely heeded these—another light
From a lone chamber struck upon his sight.
Towards it he moved, a scarcely closing door
Revealed the ray within, but nothing more.
With hasty step a figure outward past,
Then paused—and turned—and paused—'tis She at last !
No poignard in that hand—nor sign of ill—
« Thanks to that softening heart—she could not kill ! »
Again he looked, the wildness of her eye
Starts from the day abrupt and fearfully.
She stopped—threw back her dark far-floating hair
That nearly veiled her face and bosom fair :
As if she late had bent her leaning head
Above some object of her doubt or dread.
They meet—upon her brow—unknown—forgot—
Her hurrying hand had left—'twas but a spot—
Its hue was all he saw, and scarce withstood—
Oh ! slight but certain pledge of crime—'tis blood !

X.

He had seen battle—he had brooded lone
O'er promised pangs to sentenced guilt foreshown ;
He had been tempted—chastened—and the chain
Yet on his arms might ever there remain :
But ne'er from strife—captivity—remorse—
From all his feelings in their inmost force—

So thrilled—so shuddered every creeping vein,
As now they froze before that purple stain.
That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak,
Had banished all the beauty from her cheek!
Blood he had viewed—could view unmoved—but then
It flowed in combat, or was shed by men!

XI.

« 'Tis done—he nearly waked—but it is done.
« Corsair! he perished—thou art dearly won.
« All words would now be vain—away—away!
« Our bark is tossing—'tis already day.
« The few gained over, now are wholly mine,
« And these thy yet surviving band shall join:
« Anon my voice shall vindicate my hand,
« When once our sail forsakes this hated strand.»

XII.

She clapped her hands—and through the gallery pour,
Equipped for flight, her vassals—Greek and Moor,
Silent but quick they stoop, his chains unbind;
Once more his limbs are free as mountain wind!
But on his heavy heart such sadness sate,
As if they there transferred that iron weight.
No words are uttered—at her sign, a door
Reveals the secret passage to the shore;
The city lies behind—they speed, they reach
The glad waves dancing on the yellow beach;
And Conrad following, at her beck, obeyed,
Nor cared he now if rescued or betrayed;
Resistance were as useless as if Seyd
Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.

XIII.

Embarked, the sail unfurled, the light breeze blew—
 How much had Conrad's memory to review !—
 Sunk he in contemplation—till the cape
 Where last he anchored reared its giant shape.
 Ah !—since that fatal night, though brief the time,
 Had swept an age of terror, grief, and crime.
 As its far shadow frowned above the mast,
 He veiled his face, and sorrowed as he past ;
 He thought of all—Gonsalvo and his band,
 His fleeting triumph and his failing hand ;
 He thought on her afar, his lonely bride—
 He turned and saw—Gulnare, the homicide !

XIV.

She watched his features till she could not bear
 Their freezing aspect and averted air,
 And that strange fierceness foreign to her eye,
 Fell quenched in tears, too late to shed or dry.
 She knelt beside him and his hand she prest,
 « Thou may'st forgive though Alla's self detest ;
 « But for that deed of darkness what wert thou ?
 « Reproach me—but not yet—Oh ! spare me *now* !
 « I am not what I seem—this fearful night
 « My brain bewildered—do not madden quite !
 « If I had never loved—though less my guilt,
 « Thou hadst not lived to—hate me—if thou wilt. »

XV.

She wrongs his thoughts, they more himself upbraid
 Than her, though undesigned, the wretch he made ;
 But speechless all, deep, dark, and unexpressed,
 They bleed within that silent cell—his breast.

Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge,
The blue waves sport around the stern they urge ;
Far on the horizon's verge appears a speck—
A spot—a mast—a sail—an armed deck !
Their little bark her men of watch descry,
And ampler canvas woos the wind from high ;
She bears her down majestically near,
Speed on her prow, and terror in her tier ;
A flash is seen—the ball beyond their bow
Booms harmless hissing to the deep below.
Uprose keen Conrad from his silent trance,
A long, long absent gladness in his glance ;
“ 'Tis mine—my blood-red flag!—again—again—
“ I am not all deserted on the main ! ”
They own the signal, answer to the hail,
Hoist out the boat at once, and slacken sail,
“ 'Tis Conrad ! Conrad ! ” shouting from the deck,
Command nor duty could their transport check !
With light alacrity and gaze of pride,
They view him mount once more his vessel's side ;
A smile relaxing in each rugged face,
Their arms can scarce forbear a rough embrace.
He—half forgetting danger and defeat,
Returns their greeting as a chief may greet,
Wrings with a cordial grasp Anselmo's hand,
And feels he yet can conquer and command !

XVI.

These greetings o'er, the feelings that o'erflow,
Yet grieve to win him back without a blow ;
They sailed prepared for vengeance—had they known
A woman's hand secured that deed her own,
She were their queen—less scrupulous are they
Than haughty Conrad how they win their way.

With many an asking smile, and wondering stare,
They whisper round, and gaze upon Gulnare;
And her, at once above—beneath her sex,
Whom blood appalled not, their regards perplex.
To Conrad turns her faint imploring eye,
She drops her veil, and stands in silence by;
Her arms are meekly folded on that breast,
Which—Conrad safe—to fate resigned the rest.
Though worse than phrenzy could that bosom fill,
Extreme in love or hate, in good or ill,
The worst of crimes had left her woman still!

XVII.

This Conrad marked, and felt—ah! could he less?
Hate of that deed—but grief for her distress;
What she has done no tears can wash away,
And heaven must punish on its angry day:
But—it was done—he knew, whate'er guilt,
For him that poignard smote, that blood was spilt;
And he was free!—and she for him had given
Her all on earth, and more than all in heaven!
And now he turned him to that dark-eyed slave
Whose brow was bowed beneath the glance he gave,
Who now seemed changed and humbled:—faint and meek
But varying oft the colour of her cheek
To deeper shades of paleness—all its red
That fearful spot which stained it from the dead!
He took that hand—it trembled—now too late—
So soft in love—so wildly nerved in hate;
He clasped that hand—it trembled—and his own
Had lost its firmness, and his voice its tone.
«Gulnare!»—but she replied not—«dear Gulnare!»
She raised her eye—her only answer there—

At once she sought and sunk in his embrace:
If he had driven her from that resting place,
His had been more or less than mortal heart,
But—good or ill—it bade her not depart.
Perchance, but for the bodings of his breast,
His latest virtue then had joined the rest.
Yet even Medora might forgive the kiss
That asked from form so fair no more than this—
The first—the last that Frailty stole from Faith—
To lips where Love had lavished all his breath,
To lips—whose broken sighs such fragrance fling,
As he had fanned them freshly with his wing!

XVIII.

They gain by twilight's hour their lonely isle.
To them the very rocks appear to smile;
The haven hums with many a cheering sound,
The beacons blaze their wonted stations round,
The boats are darting o'er the curly bay,
And sportive dolphins bend them through the spray;
Even the hoarse sea-bird's shrill, discordant shriek,
Greets like the welcome of his tuneless beak!
Beneath each lamp that through its lattice gleams,
Their fancy paints the friends that trim the beams.
Oh! what can sanctify the joys of home,
Like Hope's gay glance from Ocean's troubled foam?

XIX.

The lights are high on beacon and from bower,
And midst them Conrad seeks Medora's tower:
He looks in vain—'tis strange—and all remark,
Amid so many, hers alone is dark.
'Tis strange—of yore its welcome never failed,
Nor now, perchance, extinguished, only veiled.

With the first boat descends he for the shore,
And looks impatient on the lingering oar.
Oh! for a wing beyond the falcon's flight,
To bear him like an arrow to that height!
With the first pause the resting rowers gave,
He waits not—looks not—leaps into the wave,
Strives through the surge, bestrides the beach, and high
Ascends the path familiar to his eye.

He reached his turret door—he paused—no sound
Broke from within; and all was night around.
He knocked, and loudly—footstep nor reply
Announced that any heard or deemed him nigh;
He knocked—but faintly—for his trembling hand
Refused to aid his heavy heart's demand.
The portal opens—'tis a well-known face—
But not the form he panted to embrace.
Its lips are silent—twice his own essayed,
And failed to frame the question they delayed;
He snatched the lamp—its light will answer all—
It quits his grasp, expiring in the fall.
He would not wait for that reviving ray—
As soon could he have lingered there for day;
But, glimmering through the dusky corridor,
Another chequers o'er the shadowed floor;
His steps the chamber gain—his eyes behold
All that his heart believed not—yet foretold!

XX.

He turned not—spoke not—sunk not—fixed his look,
And set the anxious frame that lately shook:
He gazed—how long we gaze despite of pain,
And know, but dare not own, we gaze in vain!

In life itself she was so still and fair,
That death with gentler aspect withered there ;
And the cold flowers ^{r6} her colder hand contained,
In that last grasp as tenderly were strained
As if she scarcely felt, but feigned a sleep,
And made it almost mockery yet to weep :
The long dark lashes fringed her lids of snow,
And veiled—thought shrinks from all that lurked below—
Oh ! o'er the eye death most exerts his might,
And hurls the spirit from her throne of light !
Sinks those blue orbs in that long last eclipse,
But spares, as yet, the charm around her lips—
Yet, yet they seem as they forbore to smile,
And wished repose—but only for a while ;
But the white shroud, and each extended tress,
Long—fair—but spread in utter lifelessness,
Which, late the sport of every summer wind,
Escaped the baffled wreath that strove to bind ;
These—and the pale pure cheek, became the bier—
But she is nothing—wherefore is he here ?

XXI.

He asked no question—all were answered now
By the first glance on that still—marble brow.
It was enough—she died—what recked it how ?
The love of youth, the hope of better years,
The source of softest wishes, tenderest fears,
The only living thing he could not hate,
Was reft at once—and he deserved his fate,
But did not feel it less ;—the good explore,
For peace, those realms where guilt can never soar :
The proud—the wayward—who have fixed below
Their joy—and find this earth enough for woe,

Lose in that one their all—perchance a mite—
 But who in patience parts with all delight?
 Full many a stoic eye and aspect stern
 Mask hearts where grief hath little left to learn;
 And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost,
 In smiles that least befit who wear them most.

XXII.

By those, that deepest feel, is ill exprest
 The indistinctness of the suffering breast;
 Where thousand thoughts begin to end in one,
 Which seeks from all the refuge found in none;
 No words suffice the secret soul to show,
 For Truth denies all eloquence to Woe.
 On Conrad's stricken soul exhaustion prest,
 And stupor almost lulled it into rest;
 So feeble now—his mother's softness crept
 To those wild eyes, which like an infant's wept:
 It was the very weakness of his brain,
 Which thus confessed without relieving pain.
 None saw his trickling tears—perchance, if seen,
 That useless flood of grief had never been:
 Nor long they flowed—he dried them to depart,
 In helpless—hopeless—brokenness of heart:
 The sun goes forth—but Conrad's day is dim;
 And the night cometh—ne'er to pass from him!
 There is no darkness like the cloud of mind,
 On Grief's vain eye—the blindest of the blind!
 Which may not—dare not see—but turns aside
 To blackest shade—nor will endure a guide!

XXIII.

His heart was formed for softness—warped to wrong;
Betrayed too early, and beguiled too long;
Each feeling pure—as falls the dropping dew
Within the grot; like that had hardened too;
Less clear, perchance, its earthly trials passed,
But sunk, and chilled, and petrified at last.
Yet tempests wear, and lightning cleaves the rock;
If such his heart, so shattered it the shock.
There grew one flower beneath its rugged brow,
Though dark the shade—it sheltered—saved till now.
The thunder came—that bolt hath blasted both,
The granite's firmness, and the lily's growth:
The gentle plant hath left no leaf to tell
Its tale, but shrunk and withered where it fell,
And of its cold protector, blacken round
But shivered fragments on the barren ground!

XXIV.

'Tis morn—to venture on his lonely hour
Few dare; though now Anselmo sought his tower.
He was not there—nor seen along the shore;
Ere night, alarmed, their isle is traversed o'er:
Another morn—another bids them seek,
And shout his name till echo waxeth weak;
Mount—grotto—cavern—valley searched in vain,
They find on shore a sea-boat's broken chain:
Their hope revives—they follow o'er the main.
'Tis idle all—moons roll on moons away,
And Conrad comes not—came not since that day:
Nor trace, nor tidings of his doom declare
Where lives his grief, or perished his despair!

Long mourned his band—whom none could mourn beside ;
 And fair the monument they gave his bride :
 For him they raise not the recording stone—
 His death yet dubious, deeds too widely known ;
 He left a Corsair's name to other times,
 Linked with one virtue, and a thousand crimes. 17

NOTES

TO

THE CORSAIR.

THE time in this poem may seem too short for the occurrences, but the whole of the Ægean isles are within a few hours sail of the continent, and the reader must be kind enough to take the *wind* as I have often found it.

Note 1, page 75, line 21.

Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.

Orlando, Canto 10.

Note 2, page 79, line 29.

Around the waves' phosphoric brightness broke.

By night, particularly in a warm latitude, every stroke of the oar, every motion of the boat or ship, is followed by a slight flash like sheet lightning from the water.

Note 3, page 82, line 11.

Though to the rest the sober berry's juice.

Coffee.

Note 4, page 82, line 13.

The long chibouque's dissolving cloud display.

Pipe.

Note 5, page 82, line 14.

While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.

Dancing-girls.

Note to Canto II, page 82, line 29.

It has been objected that Conrad's entering disguised as a spy is out of nature.—Perhaps so. I find something not unlike it in history.

« Anxious to explore with his own eyes the state of the Vandals, Majorian ventured, after disguising the colour of his hair, to visit Carthage in the character of his own ambassador; and Genseric was afterwards mortified by the

discovery, that he had entertained and dismissed the Emperor of the Romans. Such an anecdote may be rejected as an improbable fiction; but it is a fiction which would not have been imagined unless in the life of a hero." *Gibbon, D. and F. Vol. VI, p. 180.*

That Conrad is a character not altogether out of nature I shall attempt to prove by some historical coincidences which I have met with since writing « The Corsair. »

« Eccelin prisonnier, » dit Rolandini, « s'enfermait dans un silence menaçant; il fixait sur la terre son visage féroce, et ne donnait point d'essor à sa profonde indignation.—De toutes parts cependant les soldats et les peuples accouraient; ils voulaient voir cet homme, jadis si puissant, et la joie universelle éclatait de toutes parts.

* * * * *

« Eccelin était d'une petite taille; mais tout l'aspect de sa personne, tous ses mouvemens indiquaient un soldat.—Son langage était amer, son déportement superbe,—et, par son seul regard, il faisait trembler les plus hardis. » *Sismondi, tome III, pages 219, 220.*

« Gizericus (Genseric, king of the Vandals, the conqueror of both Carthage and Rome), staturâ mediocris, et equi casu claudicans, animo profundus, sermone rarus, luxuriæ contemptor, irâ turbidus, habendi cupidus, ad sollicitandas gentes providentissimus. » etc. etc. *Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 33.*

I beg leave to quote these gloomy realities to keep in countenance my Giaour and Corsair.

Note 6, page 85, line 17.

And my stern vow and order's laws oppose.

The Dervises are in colleges, and of different orders, as the monks.

Note 7, page 86, line 21.

They seize that Dervise!—seize on Zatanai!

Satan.

Note 8, page 87, line 8.

He tore his beard, and foaming fled the fight.

A common and not very novel effect of Mussulman

anger. See Prince Eugene's Memoirs, page 24. « The Seraskier received a wound in the thigh ; he plucked up his beard by the roots, because he was obliged to quit the field. »

Note 9, page 88, line 20.

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare.

Gulnare, a female name; it means, literally, the flower of the Pomegranate.

Note 10, page 96, line 2.

Till even the scaffold echoes with their jest!

In Sir Thomas More, for instance, on the scaffold, and Anne Boleyn in the Tower, when grasping her neck, she remarked, that it « was too slender to trouble the headsman much. » During one part of the French Revolution, it became a fashion to leave some « mot » as a legacy ; and the quantity of facetious last words spoken during that period would form a melancholy jest-book of a considerable size.

Note 11, page 102, line 2.

That closed their murdered sage's latest day!

Socrates drank the hemlock a short time before sunset (the hour of execution), notwithstanding the entreaties of his disciples to wait till the sun went down.

Note 12, page 102, line 14.

The queen of night asserts her silent reign.

The twilight in Greece is much shorter than in our own country; the days in winter are longer, but in summer of shorter duration.

Note 13, page 102, line 24.

The gleaming turret of the gay Kiosk.

The Kiosk is a Turkish summer-house ; the palm is without the present walls of Athens, not far from the temple of Theseus, between which and the tree the wall intervenes. —Cephisus' stream is indeed scanty, and Ilissus has no stream at all.

Note 14, page 103, line 2.

That frown where gentler Ocean seems to smile.

The opening lines, as far as section II, have, perhaps, little business here, and were annexed to an unpublished (though printed) poem; but they were written on the spot in the spring of 1811, and—I scarce know why—the reader must excuse their appearance here if he can.

Note 15, page 105, line 29.

His only bends in seeming o'er his beads.

The Comboloio, or Mahometan rosary; the beads are in number ninety-nine.

Note 16, page 120, line 3.

And the cold flowers her colder hand contained.

In the Levant it is the custom to strew flowers on the bodies of the dead, and in the hands of young persons to place a nosegay.

Note 17, page 123, last line.

Linked with one virtue, and a thousand crimes.

That the point of honour which is represented in one instance of Conrad's character has not been carried beyond the bounds of probability may perhaps be in some degree confirmed by the following anecdote of a brother buccaneer in the present year, 1814.

Our readers have all seen the account of the enterprise against the pirates of Barrataria; but few, we believe, were informed of the situation, history, or nature of that establishment. For the information of such as were unacquainted with it, we have procured from a friend the following interesting narrative of the main facts, of which he has personal knowledge, and which cannot fail to interest some of our readers.

Barrataria is a bay, or a narrow arm of the gulph of Mexico: it runs through a rich but very flat country, until it reaches within a mile of the Mississippi river, fifteen miles below the city of New Orleans. The bay has branches almost innumerable, in which persons can lie concealed from the severest scrutiny. It communicates with three lakes which lie on the south-west side, and these, with the

lake of the same name, and which lies contiguous to the sea, where there is an island formed by the two arms of this lake and the sea. The east and west points of this island were fortified in the year 1811, by a band of pirates, under the command of one Monsieur La Fitte. A large majority of these outlaws are of that class of the population of the state of Louisiana who fled from the island of St. Domingo during the troubles there, and took refuge in the island of Cuba: and when the last war between France and Spain commenced, they were compelled to leave that island with the short notice of a few days. Without ceremony, they entered the United States, the most of them the State of Louisiana, with all the negroes they had possessed in Cuba. They were notified by the governor of that State of the clause in the constitution which forbade the importation of slaves; but, at the same time, received the assurance of the governor that he would obtain, if possible, the approbation of the general government for their retaining this property.

The island of Barrataria is situated about lat. 29 deg. 15 min. lon. 92 30. and is as remarkable for its health as for the superior scale and shell fish with which its waters abound. The chief of this horde, like Charles de Moor, had mixed with his many vices some virtues. In the year 1813, this party had, from its turpitude and boldness, claimed the attention of the governor of Louisiana; and to break up the establishment, he thought proper to strike at the head. He therefore offered a reward of 500 dollars for the head of Monsieur La Fitte, who was well known to the inhabitants of the city of New Orleans, from his immediate connexion, and his once having been a fencing-master in that city of great reputation, which art he learnt in Buonaparte's army, where he was a captain. The reward which was offered by the governor for the head of La Fitte was answered by the offer of a reward from the latter of 15,000 for the head of the governor. The governor ordered out a company to march from the city to La Fitte's island, and to burn and destroy all the property, and to bring to the city of New Orleans all his banditti. This company, under the command of a man who had been the intimate associate of

this bold captain, approached very near to the fortified island before he saw a man, or heard a sound, until he heard a whistle, not unlike a boatswain's call. Then it was he found himself surrounded by armed men who had emerged from the secret avenues which led into Bayou. Here it was that the modern Charles de Moor developed his few noble traits; for to this man who had come to destroy his life and all that was dear to him, he not only spared his life, but offered him that which would have made the honest soldier easy for the remainder of his days, which was indignantly refused. He then, with the approbation of his captor, returned to the city. This circumstance, and some concomitant events, proved that this band of pirates was not to be taken by land. Our naval force having always been small in that quarter, exertions for the destruction of this illicit establishment could not be expected from them until augmented; for an officer of the navy, with most of the gun-boats on that station, had to retreat from an overwhelming force of La Fitte's. So soon as the augmentation of the navy authorised an attack, one was made; the overthrow of this banditti has been the result; and now this almost invulnerable point and key to New Orleans is clear of an enemy, it is to be hoped the government will hold it by a strong military force.—*From an American Newspaper.*

In Noble's continuation of Granger's Biographical Dictionary, there is a singular passage in his account of archbishop Blackbourne, and as in some measure connected with the profession of the hero of the foregoing poem, I cannot resist the temptation of extracting it.

« There is something mysterious in the history and character of Dr. Blackbourne. The former is but imperfectly known; and report has even asserted he was a buccaneer: and that one of his brethren in that profession having asked, on his arrival in England, what had become of his old chum, Blackbourne, was answered, he is archbishop of York. We are informed, that Blackbourne was installed sub-dean of Exeter, in 1694, which office he resigned in 1702; but after his successor, Lewis Barnet's death, in 1704, he regained it. In the following year he

« became dean; and, in 1714, held with it the archdeanery
 « of Cornwall. He was consecrated bishop of Exeter, fe-
 « bruary 24, 1716; and translated to York, november 28,
 « 1724, as a reward, according to court scandal, for unit-
 « ing George I. to the Dutchess of Munster. This, how-
 « ever, appears to have been an unfounded calumny. As
 « archbishop he behaved with great prudence, and was
 « equally respectable as the guardian of the revenues of the
 « see. Rumour whispered he retained the vices of his youth,
 « and that a passion for the fair sex formed an item in the
 « list of his weaknesses; but so far from being convicted
 « by seventy witnesses, he does not appear to have been
 « directly criminated by one. In short, I look upon these
 « aspersions as the effects of mere malice. How is it pos-
 « sible a buccaneer should have been so good a scholar as
 « Blackbourne certainly was, he who had so perfect a
 « knowledge of the classics (particularly of the Greek tra-
 « gedians), as to be able to read them with the same ease as
 « he could Shakespeare, must have taken great pains to
 « acquire the learned languages; and have had both leisure
 « and good masters. But he was undoubtedly educated at
 « Christ-church College, Oxford. He is allowed to have
 « been a pleasant man: this, however, was turned against
 « him, by its being said, 'he gained more hearts than
 « souls.' »

« The only voice that could soothe the passions of the
 « savage (Alphonso 3d) was that of an amiable and virtuous
 « wife, the sole object of his love; the voice of Donna Isa-
 « bella, the daughter of the Duke of Savoy, and the grand-
 « daughter of Philip 2d, King of Spain.—Her dying words
 « sunk deep into his memory; his fierce spirit melted into
 « tears; and after the last embrace, Alphonso retired into
 « his chamber to bewail his irreparable loss, and to medi-
 « tate on the vanity of human life.»—*Miscellaneous Works*
of Gibbon, New Edition, 8vo. vol. 3, page 473.

LARA,

A TALE.

LARA.

CANTO I.

I.

THE serfs are glad through Lara's wide domaine,
And slavery half forgets her feudal chain;
He, their unhop'd, but unforgotten lord,
The long self-exil'd chieftain is restored:
There be bright faces in the busy hall,
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall;
Far chequering o'er the pictured window, plays
The unwonted faggots' hospitable blaze;
And gay retainers gather the hearth,
With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth.

II.

The chief of Lara is returned again:
And why had Lara crossed the bounding main?
Left by his sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself;—that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds to rob the heart within of rest!—
With none to check, and few to point in time
The thousand paths that slope the way to crime;
Then, when he most required commandment, then
Had Lara's daring boyhood governed men.

It skills not, boots not step by step to trace
His youth through all the mazes of its race;
Short was the course his restlessness had run,
But long enough to leave him half undone.

III.

And Lara left in youth his father-land;
But from the hour he waved his parting hand
Each trace waxed fainter of his course, till all
Had nearly ceased his memory to recall.
His sire was dust, his vassals could declare,
'Twas all they knew, that Lara was not there;
Nor sent, nor came he, till conjecture grew
Cold in the many, anxious in the few.
His hall scarce echoes with his wonted name,
His portrait darkens in its fading frame,
Another chief consoled his destined bride,
The young forgot him, and the old had died;
« Yet doth he live! » exclaims the impatient heir,
And sighs for sables which he must not wear.
A hundred scutcheons deck with gloomy grace
The Lara's last and longest dwelling place;
But one is absent from the mouldering file,
That now were welcome in that Gothic pile.

IV.

He comes at last in sudden loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess;
They more might marvel, when the greeting's o'er,
Not that he came, but came not long before:
No train is his beyond a single page,
Of foreign aspect, and of tender age.
Years had rolled on, and fast they speed away
To those that wander as to those that stay;

But lack of tidings from another clime
Had lent a flagging wing to weary Time.
They see, they recognise, yet almost deem
The present dubious, or the past a dream.

He lives, nor yet is past his manhood's prime,
Though seared by toil, and something touched by time;
His faults, whate'er they were, if scarce forgot,
Might be untaught him by his varied lot;
Nor good nor ill of late were known, his name
Might yet uphold his patrimonial fame :
His soul in youth was haughty, but his sins
No more than pleasure from the stripling wins ;
And such, if not yet hardened in their course,
Might be redeemed, nor ask a long remorse.

V.

And they indeed were changed—'tis quickly seen
Whate'er he be, 'twas not what he had been :
That brow in furrowed lines had fixed at last,
And spake of passions, but of passion past :
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise ;
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look ;
And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath stung,
That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own the wound ;
All these seemed his ; and something more beneath,
Than glance could well reveal, or accent breathe.
Ambition, glory, love, the common aim,
That some can conquer, and that all would claim,

Within his breast appeared no more to strive,
Yet seemed as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lightened o'er his livid face.

VI.

Not much he loved long question of the past,
Nor told of wondrous wilds, and deserts vast,
In those far lands where he had wandered lone,
And—as himself would have it seem—unknown :
Yet these in vain his eye could scarcely scan,
Nor glean experience from his fellow man ;
But what he had beheld he shunned to show,
As hardly worth a stranger's care to know ;
If still more prying such enquiry grew,
His brow fell darker, and his words more few.

VII.

Not unrejoiced to see him once again,
Warm was his welcome to the haunts of men ;
Born of high lineage, linked in high command,
He mingled with the Magnates of his land ;
Joined the carousals of the great and gay,
And saw them smile or sigh their hours away ;
But still he only saw, and did not share
The common pleasure or the general care ;
He did not follow what they all pursued
With hope still baffled, still to be renewed ;
Nor shadowy honour, nor substantial gain,
Nor beauty's preference, and the rival's pain :
Around him some mysterious circle thrown
Repelled approach, and showed him still alone ;
Upon his eye sate something of reproof,
That kept at least frivolity aloof ;

And things more timid that beheld him near,
In silence gazed, or whispered mutual fear;
And they the wiser, friendlier few confest
They deemed him better than his air exprest.

VIII.

'Twas strange—in youth all action and all life,
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife;
Woman—the field—the Ocean—all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,
In turn he tried—he ransacked all below,
And found his recompense in joy or woe,
No tame, trite medium; for his feelings sought
In that intenseness an escape from thought:
The tempest of his heart in scorn had gazed,
On that the feebler elements hath raised;
The rapture of his heart had looked on high,
And asked if greater dwelt beyond the sky:
Chained to excess, the slave of each extreme,
How woke he from the wildness of that dream?
Alas! he told not — but he did awake
To curse the withered heart that would not break.

IX.

Books, for his volume heretofore was Man,
With eye more curious he appeared to scan,
And oft, in sudden mood, for many a day
From all communion he would start away:
And then, his rarely called attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound his hurried tread
O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers frowned
In rude but antique portraiture around:

They heard, but whispered — “ *that* must not be known —
 “ The sound of words less earthly than his own.
 “ Yes, they who chose might smile, but some had seen
 “ They scarce knew what, but more than should have been.
 “ Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head
 “ Which hands profane had gathered from the dead,
 “ That still beside his opened volume lay,
 “ As if to startle all save him away?
 “ Why slept he not when others were at rest?
 “ Why heard no music, and received no guest?
 “ All was not well they deemed — but where the wrong?
 “ Some knew perchance — but ’twere a tale too long;
 “ And such besides were too discreetly wise,
 “ To more than hint their knowledge in surmise;
 “ But if they would — they could ” — Around the board,
 Thus Lara’s vassals prattled of their lord.

X.

It was the night — and Lara’s glassy stream
 The stars are studding, each with imaged beam:
 So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
 And yet they glide like happiness away;
 Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
 The immortal lights that live along the sky:
 Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
 And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
 Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
 And Innocence would offer to her love.
 These deck the shore; the waves their channel make
 In windings bright and mazy like the snake.
 All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
 You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
 Secure that nought of evil could delight
 To walk in such a scene, on such a night!

It was a moment only for the good :
So Lara deemed, nor longer there he stood,
But turned in silence to his castle-gate ;
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate :
Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze,
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now—
No—no—the storm may beat upon his brow,
Unfelt—unsparing—but a night like this,
A night of beauty, mocked such breast as his.

XI.

He turned within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall ;
There were the painted forms of other times,
'Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition ; and the gloomy vaults
That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults ;
And half a column of the pompous page,
That speeds the specious tale from age to age ;
Where History's pen its praise or blame supplies,
And lies like truth, and still most truly lies.
He wandering mused, and as the moonbeam shone
Through the dim lattice o'er the floor of stone,
And the high fretted roof, and saints, that there
O'er gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer,
Reflected in fantastic figures grew,
Like life, but not like mortal life, to view ;
His bristling locks of sable, brow of gloom,
And the wide waving of his shaken plume,
Glanced like a spectre's attributes, and gave
His aspect all that terror gives the grave.

XII.

'Twas midnight—all was slumber ; the lone light
Dimmed in the lamp, as loth to break the night.
Hark! there be murmurs heard in Lara's hall—
A sound—a voice—a shriek—a fearful call!
A long, loud shriek—and silence—did they hear
That frantic echo burst the sleeping ear?
They heard and rose, and tremulously brave
Rush where the sound invoked their aid to save ;
They come with half-lit tapers in their hands,
And snatched in startled haste unbelted brands.

XIII.

Cold as the marble where his length was laid,
Pale as the beam that o'er his features played,
Was Lara stretched ; his half drawn sabre near,
Dropped it should seem in more than nature's fear ;
Yet he was firm, or had been firm till now,
And still defiance knit his gathered brow ;
Though mixed with terror, senseless as he lay,
There lived upon his lip the wish to slay ;
Some half formed threat in utterance there had died,
Some imprecation of despairing pride ;
His eye was almost sealed, but not forsook,
Even in its trance the gladiator's look,
That oft awake his aspect could disclose,
And now was fixed in horrible repose.
They raise him—bear him ;—hush ! he breathes, he speaks
The swarthy blush recolours in his cheeks,
His lip resumes its red, his eye, though dim,
Rolls wide and wild, each slowly quivering limb
Recalls its function, but his words are strung
In terms that seem not of his native tongue ;

Distinct but strange, enough they understand
To deem them accents of another land,
And such they were, and meant to meet an ear
That hears them not—alas! that cannot hear!

XIV.

His page approached, and he alone appeared
To know the import of the words they heard;
And, by the changes of his cheek and brow,
They were not such as Lara should avow,
Nor he interpret, yet with less surprise
Than those around their chieftain's state he eyes,
But Lara's prostrate form he bent beside,
And in that tongue which seemed his own replied,
And Lara heeds those tones that gently seem
To soothe away the horrors of his dream;
If dream it were, that thus could overthrow
A breast that needed not ideal woe.

XV.

Whate'er his phrenzy dreamed or eye beheld,
If yet remembered ne'er to be revealed,
Rests at his heart: the custom'd morning came,
And breathed new vigour in his shaken frame;
And solace sought he none from priest nor leech,
And soon the same in movement and in speech
As heretofore he filled the passing hours,
Nor less he smiles, nor more his forehead lours
Than these were wont; and if the coming night
Appeared less welcome now to Lara's sight,
He to his marvelling vassals showed it not,
Whose shuddering proved *their* fear was less forgot.

In trembling pairs (alone they dared not) crawl
The astonished slaves, and shun the fated hall;
The waving banner, and the clapping door,
The rustling tapestry, and the echoing floor;
The long dim shadows of surrounding trees,
The flapping bat, the night song of the breeze;
Aught they behold or hear their thought appals,
As evening saddens o'er the dark grey walls.

XVI.

Vain thought! that hour of ne'er unravelled gloom
Came not again, or Lara could assume
A seeming of forgetfulness, that made
His vassals more amazed nor less afraid—
Had memory vanished then with sense restored?
Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their lord
Betrayed a feeling that recalled to these
That fevered moment of his mind's disease.
Was it a dream? was his the voice that spoke
Those strange wild accents; his the cry that broke
Their slumber? his the oppressed o'er-laboured heart
That ceased to beat, the look that made them start?
Could he who thus had suffered, so forget,
When such as saw that suffering shudder yet?
Or did that silence prove his memory fixed
Too deep for words, indelible, unmixed
In that corroding secrecy which gnaws
The heart to show the effect, but not the cause?
Not so in him; his breast had buried both,
Nor common gazers could discern the growth
Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave half told;
They choak the feeble words that would unfold.

XVII.

In him inexplicably mixed appeared
Much to be loved and hated, sought and feared;
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot;
His silence formed a theme for others' prate—
They guessed—they gazed—they fain would know his fate.
What had he been? what was he, thus unknown,
Who walked their world, his lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say,
With them he could seem gay amidst the gay;
But owned, that smile if oft observed and near,
Waned in its mirth and withered to a sneer;
That smile might reach his lip, but passed not by,
None e'er could trace its laughter to his eye:
Yet there was softness too in his regard,
At times, a heart as not by nature hard,
But once perceived, his spirit seemed to chide
Such weakness, as unworthy of its pride,
And steeled itself, as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others half withheld esteem;
In self-inflicted penance of a breast
Which tenderness might once have wrung from rest;
In vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.

XVIII.

There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurled;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped;

But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
His mind would half exult and half regret :
With more capacity for love than earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and birth,
His early dreams of good outstripped the truth,
And troubled manhood followed baffled youth ;
With thought of years in phantom chase mispent,
And wasted powers for better purpose lent ;
And fiery passions that had poured their wrath
In hurried desolation o'er his path,
And left the better feelings all at strife
In wild reflection o'er his stormy life ;
But haughty still, and loth himself to blame,
He called on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul, and feast the worm ;
'Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will :
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,
But not in pity, not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought,
That swayed him onward with a secret pride
To do what few or none would do beside ;
And this same impulse would, in tempting time,
Mislead his spirit equally to crime ;
So much he soared beyond, or sunk beneath
The men with whom he felt condemned to breathe,
And longed by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal state ;
His mind abhorring this had fixed her throne
Far from the world, in regions of her own :
Thus coldly passing all that passed below,
His blood in temperate seeming now would flow :

Ah! happier if it ne'er with guilt had glowed,
But ever in that icy smoothness flowed!
'Tis true, with other men their path he walked,
And like the rest in seeming did and talked,
Nor outraged Reason's rules by flaw nor start,
His madness was not of the head, but heart;
And rarely wandered in his speech, or drew
His thoughts so forth as to offend the view.

XIX.

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
And seeming gladness to remain unseen;
He had (if 'twere not nature's boon) an art
Of fixing memory on another's heart:
It was not love perchance—nor hate—nor aught
That words can image to express the thought;
But they who saw him did not see in vain,
And once beheld, would ask of him again:
And those to whom he spake remembered well,
And on the words, however light, would dwell:
None knew, nor how, nor why, but he entwined
Himself perforce around the hearer's mind;
There he was stamped, in liking, or in hate,
If greeted once; however brief the date
That friendship, pity, or aversion knew,
Still there within the inmost thought he grew.
You could not penetrate his soul, but found,
Despite your wonder, to your own he wound;
His presence haunted still; and from the breast
He forced an all-unwilling interest:
Vain was the struggle in that mental net,
His spirit seemed to dare you to forget!

XX.

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims
Appear—a highborn and a welcome guest
To Otho's hall came Lara with the rest.
The long carousal shakes the illumined hall,
Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain:
Blest are the early hearts and gentle hands
That mingle there in well according bands;
It is a sight the careful brow might smoothe,
And make Age smile, and dream itself to youth,
And Youth forget such hour was past on earth,
So springs the exulting bosom to that mirth!

XXI.

And Lara gazed on these, sedately glad,
His brow belied him if his soul was sad;
And his glance followed fast each fluttering fair,
Whose steps of lightness woke no echo there:
He leaned against the lofty pillar nigh,
With folded arms and long attentive eye,
Nor marked a glance so sternly fixed on his,
Ill brooked high Lara scrutiny like this:
At length he caught it, 'tis a face unknown,
But seems as searching his, and his alone;
Prying and dark, a stranger's by his mien,
Who still till now had gazed on him unseen;
At length encountering meets the mutual gaze
Of keen enquiry, and of mute amaze;
On Lara's glance emotion gathering grew,
As if distrusting that the stranger threw;

Along the stranger's aspect fixed and stern,
Flashed more than thence the vulgar eye could learn.

XXII.

« 'Tis he! » the stranger cried, and those that heard,
Reechoed fast and far the whispered word.
« 'Tis he! »—« 'Tis who! » they question far and near,
Till louder accents rung on Lara's ear;
So widely spread, few bosoms well could brook
The general marvel, or that single look;
But Lara stirred not, changed not, the surprise
That sprung at first to his arrested eyes
Seemed now subsided, neither sunk nor raised
Glanced his eye round, though still the stranger gazed;
And drawing nigh, exclaimed, with haughty sneer,
« 'Tis he!—how came he thence?—what doth he here? »

XXIII.

It were too much for Lara to pass by
Such question, so repeated fierce and high;
With look collected, but with accent cold,
More mildly firm than petulantly bold,
He turned, and met the inquisitorial tone—
« My name is Lara!—when thine own is known,
« Doubt not my fitting answer to requite
« The unlooked for courtesy of such a knight.
« 'Tis Lara!—further wouldst thou mark or ask?
« I shun no question, and I wear no mask. »

« Thou shun'st no question! Ponder—is there none
« Thy heart must answer, though thine ear would shun?
« And deem'st thou me unknown too? Gaze again!
« At least thy memory was not given in vain.

« Oh! never canst thou cancel half her debt,
« Eternity forbids thee to forget. »

With slow and searching glance upon his face
Grew Lara's eyes, but nothing there could trace
They knew, or chose to know—with dubious look
He deigned no answer, but his head he shook,
And half contemptuous turned to pass away;
But the stern stranger motioned him to stay.

« A word!—I charge thee stay, and answer here

« To one, who, wert thou noble, were thy peer,

« But as thou wast and art—nay, frown not, lord,

« If false, 'tis easy to disprove the word—

« But, as thou wast and art, on thee looks down,

« Distrusts thy smiles, but shakes not at thy frown.

« Art thou not he? whose deeds— »

« Whate'er I be,

« Words wild as these, accusers like to thee

« I list no further; those with whom they weigh

« May hear the rest, nor venture to gainsay

« The wondrous tale no doubt thy tongue can tell,

« Which thus begins so courteously and well.

« Let Otho cherish here his polished guest,

« To him my thanks and thoughts shall be exprest. »

And here their wondering host hath interposed—

« Whate'er there be between you undisclosed,

« This is no time nor fitting place to mar

« The mirthful meeting with a wordy war.

« If thou, Sir Ezzelin, hast ought to show

« Which it befits Count Lara's ear to know,

« To-morrow, here, or elsewhere, as may best

« Beseem your mutual judgment, speak the rest;

« I pledge myself for thee, as not unknown,

« Though like Count Lara now returned alone

« From other lands, almost a stranger grown;

« And if from Lara's blood and gentle birth
« I augur right of courage and of worth,
« He will not that untainted line belie,
« Nor aught that knighthood may accord, deny. »

« To-morrow be it, » Ezzelin replied,
« And here our several worth and truth be tried ;
« I gage my life, my falchion to attest
« My words, so may I mingle with the blest! »
What answers Lara? to its centre shrunk
His soul, in deep abstraction sudden sunk ;
The words of many, and the eyes of all
That there were gathered, seemed on him to fall ;
But his were silent, his appeared to stray
In far forgetfulness away—away—
Alas! that heedlessness of all around
Bespoke remembrance only too profound.

XXIV.

« To-morrow!—ay, to-morrow! » further word
Than those repeated none from Lara heard ;
Upon his brow no outward passion spoke,
From his large eye no flashing anger broke ;
Yet there was something fixed in that low tone,
Which showed resolve, determined, though unknown.
He seized his cloak—his head he slightly bowed,
And passing Ezzelin, he left the crowd ;
And, as he passed him, smiling met the frown
With which that chieftain's brow would bear him down :
It was nor smile of mirth, nor struggling pride
That curbs to scorn the wrath it cannot hide ;
But that of one in his own heart secure
Of all that he would do, or could endure.

Could this mean peace? the calmness of the good?
Or guilt grown old in desperate hardihood?
Alas! too like in confidence are each,
For man to trust to mortal look or speech;
From deeds, and deeds alone, may he discern
Truths which it wrings the unpractised heart to learn.

XXV.

And Lara called his page, and went his way—
Well could that stripling word or sign obey:
His only follower from those climes afar,
Where the soul glows beneath a brighter star;
For Lara left the shore from whence he sprung,
In duty patient and sedate though young;
Silent as him he served, his faith appears
Above his station, and beyond his years.
Though not unknown the tongue of Lara's land,
In such from him he rarely heard command;
But fleet his step and clear his tones would come,
When Lara's lip breathed forth the words of home:
Those accents as his native mountains dear,
Awake their absent echoes in his ear,
Friends', kindreds', parents', wonted voice recall,
Now lost, abjured, for one—his friend, his all:
For him earth now disclosed no other guide;
What marvel then he rarely left his side?

XXVI.

Light was his form, and darkly delicate
That brow whereon his native sun had sate,
But had not marred, though in his beams he grew,
The cheek where oft the unbidden blush shone through;

Yet not such blush as mounts when health would show
All the heart's hue in that delighted glow;
But 'twas a hectic tint of secret care
That for a burning moment fevered there;
And the wild sparkle of his eye seemed caught
From high, and lightened with electric thought,
Though its black orb those long low lashes fringe,
Had tempered with a melancholy tinge;
Yet less of sorrow than of pride was there,
Or if 'twere grief, a grief that none should share:
And pleased not him the sports that please his age,
The tricks of youth, the frolics of the page,
For hours on Lara he would fix his glance,
As all forgotten in that watchful trance;
And from his chief withdrawn, he wandered lone,
Brief were his answers, and his questions none;
His walk the wood, his sport some foreign book;
His resting-place the bank that curbs the brook:
He seemed, like him he served, to live apart
From all that lures the eye, and fills the heart;
To know no brotherhood, and take from earth
No gift beyond that bitter boon—our birth.

XXVII.

If aught he loved, 'twas Lara; but was shown
His faith in reverence and in deeds alone;
In mute attention; and his care, which guessed
Each wish, fulfilled it ere the tongue expressed.
Still there was haughtiness in all he did,
A spirit deep that brooked not to be chid;
His zeal, though more than that of servile hands,
In act alone obeys, his air commands;
As if 'twas Lara's less than *his* desire
That thus he served, but surely not for hire.

Slight were the tasks enjoined him by his lord,
To hold the stirrup, or to bear the sword;
To tune his lute, or if he willed it more,
On tomes of other times and tongues to pore;
But ne'er to mingle with the menial train,
To whom he showed nor deference nor disdain,
But that well-worn reserve which proved he knew
No sympathy with that familiar crew:
His soul, whate'er his station or his stem,
Could bow to Lara, not descend to them.
Of higher birth he seemed, and better days,
Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrays,
So femininely white it might bespeak
Another sex, when matched with that smooth cheek,
But for his garb, and something in his gaze,
More wild and high than woman's eye betrays;
A latent fierceness that far more became
His fiery climate than his tender frame:
True, in his words it broke not from his breast,
But from his aspect might be more than guest.
Kaled his name, though rumour said he bore
Another ere he left his mountain-shore;
For sometimes he would hear, however nigh,
That name repeated loud without reply,
As unfamiliar, or, if roused again,
Start to the sound, as but remembered then;
Unless 'twas Lara's wonted voice that spake,
For then, ear, eyes, and heart would all awake.

XXVIII.

He had looked down upon the festive hall,
And marked that sudden strife so marked of all;
And when the crowd around and near him told
Their wonder at the calmness of the bold,

Their marvel how the high-born Lara bore
Such insult from a stranger, doubly sore,
The colour of young Kaled went and came,
The lip of ashes, and the cheek of flame;
And o'er his brow the dampening heart-drops threw
The sickening iciness of that cold dew,
That rises as the busy bosom sinks
With heavy thoughts from which reflection shrinks.
Yes—there be things that we must dream and dare,
And execute ere thought be half aware:
Whate'er might Kaled's be, it was enow
To seal his lip, but agonise his brow.
He gazed on Ezzelin till Lara cast
That sidelong smile upon the knight he past;
When Kaled saw that smile his visage fell,
As if on something recognized right well;
His memory read in such a meaning more
Than Lara's aspect unto others wore:
Forward he sprung—a moment, both were gone,
And all within that hall seemed left alone;
Each had so fixed his eye on Lara's mien,
All had so mixed their feelings with that scene,
That when his long dark shadow through the porch
No more relieves the glare of yon high torch,
Each pulse beats quicker, and all bosoms seem
To bound as doubting from too black a dream,
Such as we know is false, yet dread in sooth,
Because the worst is ever nearest truth.
And they are gone—but Ezzelin is there,
With thoughtful visage and imperious air;
But long remained not; ere an hour expired
He waved his hand to Otho, and retired.

XXIX.

The crowd are gone, the revellers at rest ;
The courteous host, and all-approving guest,
Again to that accustomed couch must creep
Where joy subsides, and sorrow sighs to sleep,
And man o'er-laboured with his being's strife,
Shrinks to that sweet forgetfulness of life :
There lie love's feverish hope, and cunning's guile,
Hate's working brain, and lulled ambition's wile ;
O'er each vain eye oblivion's pinions wave,
And quenched existence crouches in a grave.
What better name may slumber's bed become ?
Night's sepulchre, the universal home,
Where weakness, strength, vice, virtue, sunk supine,
Alike in naked helplessness recline ;
Glad for a while to heave unconscious breath,
Yet wake to wrestle with the dread of death,
And shun, though day but dawn on ills increast,
That sleep, the loveliest, since it dreams the least.

L A R A .

CANTO II.

I.

NIGHT wanes—the vapours round the mountains curled
Melt into morn, and Light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little, but his last ;
But mighty Nature bounds as from her birth,
The sun is in the heavens, and life on earth ;
Flowers in the valley, splendour in the beam,
Health on the gale, and freshness in the stream.
Immortal man ! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exulting inly, « they are thine ! »
Gaze on, while yet thy gladdened eye may see ;
A morrow comes when they are not for thee :
And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear ;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,
Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee, for all ;
But creeping things shall revel in their spoil,
And fit thy clay to fertilize the soil.

II.

'Tis morn—'tis noon—assembled in the hall,
The gathered chieftains come to Otho's call ;

'Tis now the promised hour, that must proclaim
The life or death of Lara's future fame ;
When Ezzelin his charge may here unfold,
And whatsoe'er the tale, it must be told
His faith was pledged, and Lara's promise given,
To meet it in the eye of man and heaven.
Why comes he not? Such truths to be divulged,
Methinks the accuser's rest is long indulged.

III.

The hour is past, and Lara too is there,
With self-confiding, coldly patient air ;
Why comes not Ezzelin? The hour is past,
And murmurs rise, and Otho's brow's o'ercast.
« I know my friend! his faith I cannot fear,
« If yet he be on earth, expect him here ;
« The roof that held him in the valley stands
« Between my own and noble Lara's lands ;
« My halls from such a guest had honour gained,
« Nor had Sir Ezzelin his host disdained,
« But that some previous proof forbade his stay,
« And urged him to prepare against to-day ;
« The word I pledged for his I pledge again,
« Or will myself redeem his knighthood's stain.»
He ceased—and Lara answered, « I am here
« To lend at thy demand a listening ear ;
« To tales of evil from a stranger's tongue,
« Whose words already might my heart have wrung,
« But that I deemed him scarcely less than mad,
« Or, at the worst, a foe ignobly bad.
« I know him not—but me it seems he knew
« In lands where—but I must not trifle too :
« Produce this babbler—or redeem the pledge ;
« Here in thy hold, and with thy falchion's edge. »

Proud Otho on the instant, reddening, threw
His glove on earth, and forth his sabre flew.
« The last alternative befits me best,
« And thus I answer for mine absent guest. »
With cheek unchanging from its sallow gloom,
However near his own or other's tomb ;
With hand, whose almost careless coolness spoke,
Its grasp well-used to deal the sabre-stroke ;
With eye, though calm, determined not to spare,
Did Lara too his willing weapon bare.
In vain the circling chieftains round them closed,
For Otho's phrenzy would not be opposed ;
And from his lip those words of insult fell—
His sword is good who can maintain them well.

IV.

Short was the conflict ; furious, blindly rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash :
He bled, and fell ; but not with deadly wound,
Stretched by a dextrous sleight along the ground.
« Demand thy life ! » He answered not : and then
From that red floor he ne'er had risen again,
For Lara's brow upon the moment grew
Almost to blackness in its demon hue ;
And fiercer shook his angry falchion now
Than when his foe's was levelled at his brow ;
Then all was stern collectedness and art,
Now rose the unleavened hatred of his heart ;
So little sparing to the foe he felled,
That when the approaching crowd his arm withheld,
He almost turned the thirsty point on those,
Who thus for mercy dared to interpose ;
But to a moment's thought that purpose bent ;
Yet looked he on him still with eye intent,

As if he loathed the ineffectual strife
That left a foe, howe'er o'erthrown, with life;
As if to search how far the wound he gave
Had sent his victim onward to his grave.

V.

They raised the bleeding Otho, and the leech
Forbade all present question, sign, and speech;
The others met within a neighbouring hall,
And he, incensed and heedless of them all,
The cause and conqueror in this sudden fray,
In haughty silence slowly strode away;
He backed his steed, his homeward path he took,
Nor cast on Otho's towers a single look.

VI.

But where was he? that meteor of a night,
Who menaced but to disappear with light?
Where was this Ezzelin? who came and went
To leave no other trace of his intent.
He left the dome of Otho long ere morn,
In darkness, yet so well the path was worn
He could not miss it: near his dwelling lay;
But there he was not, and with coming day
Came fast enquiry, which unfolded nought
Except the absence of the chief it sought.
A chamber tenantless, a steed at rest,
His host alarmed, his murmuring squires distress:
Their search extends along, around the path,
In dread to meet the marks of prowlers' wrath:
But none are there, and not a brake hath borne,
Nor gout of blood, nor shred of mantle torn;
Nor fall nor struggle hath defaced the grass,
Which still retains a mark where murder was;

Nor dabbling fingers left to tell the tale,
The bitter print of each convulsive nail,
When agonized hands that cease to guard,
Wound in that pang the smoothness of the sward.
Some such had been, if here a life was left,
But these were not ; and doubting hope is left ;
And strange suspicion whispering Lara's name,
Now daily mutters o'er his blackened fame ;
Then sudden silent when his form appeared,
Awaits the absence of the thing it feared
Again its wonted wandering to renew,
And dye conjecture with a darker hue.

VII.

Days roll along, and Otho's wounds are healed,
But not his pride ; and hate no more concealed :
He was a man of power, and Lara's foe,
The friend of all who sought to work him woe,
And from his country's justice now demands
Account of Ezzelin at Lara's hands.
Who else than Lara could have cause to fear
His presence ? who had made him disappear,
If not the man on whom his menaced charge
Had sate too deeply were he left at large ?
The general rumour ignorantly loud,
The mystery dearest to the curious crowd ;
The seeming friendlessness of him who strove
To win no confidence, and wake no love ;
The sweeping fierceness which his soul betrayed,
The skill with which he wielded his keen blade ;
Where had his arm unwarlike caught that art ?
Where had that fierceness grown upon his heart ?
For it was not the blind capricious rage
A word can kindle and a word assuage ;

But the deep working of a soul unmixed
With aught of pity where its wrath had fixed ;
Such as long power and overgorged success
Concentrates into all that's merciless :
These, linked with that desire which ever sways
Mankind, the rather to condemn than praise,
'Gainst Lara gathering raised at length a storm,
Such as himself might fear, and foes would form,
And he must answer for the absent head
Of one that haunts him still, alive or dead.

VIII.

Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent ;
That soil full many a wringing despot saw,
Who worked his wantonness in form of law ;
Long war without and frequent broil within
Had made a path for blood and giant sin,
That waited but a signal to begin
New havock, such as civil discord blends,
Which knows no neuter, owns but foes or friends ;
Fixed in his feudal fortress each was lord,
In word and deed obeyed, in soul abhorred.
Thus Lara had inherited his lands,
And with them pining hearts and sluggish hands ;
But that long absence from his native clime
Had left him stainless of oppression's crime,
And now diverted by his milder sway,
All dread by slow degrees had worn away :
The menials felt their usual awe alone,
But more for him than them that fear was grown ;
They deemed him now unhappy, though at first
Their evil judgment augured of the worst,

And each long restless night, and silent mood,
Was traced to sickness, fed by solitude:
And though his lonely habits threw of late
Gloom o'er his chamber, cheerful was his gate;
For thence the wretched ne'er unsoothed withdrew,
For them, at least, his soul compassion knew.
Cold to the great, contemptuous to the high,
The humble passed not his unheeding eye;
Much he would speak not, but beneath his roof
They found asylum oft, and ne'er reproof.
And they who watched might mark that day by day,
Some new retainers gathered to his sway;
But most of late, since Ezzelin was lost,
He played the courteous lord and bounteous host:
Perchance his strife with Otho made him dread
Some snare prepared for his obnoxious head;
Whate'er his view, his favour more obtains
With these, the people, than his fellow thanes.
If this were policy, so far 'twas sound,
The million judged but of him as they found;
From him by sterner chiefs to exile driven
They but required a shelter, and 'twas given.
By him no peasant mourned his rifled cot,
And scarce the serf could murmur o'er his lot;
With him old avarice found its hoard secure,
With him contempt forbore to mock the poor;
Youth, present cheer, and promised recompense
Detained, till all too late to part from thence:
To hate he offered, with the coming change,
The deep reversion of delayed revenge;
To love, long baffled by the unequal match,
The well-won charms success was sure to snatch.
All now was ripe, he waits but to proclaim
That slavery nothing which was still a name.

The moment came, the hour when Otho thought
Secure at last the vengeance which he sought :
His summons found the destined criminal
Begirt by thousands in his swarming hall,
Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
Defying earth, and confident of heaven.
That morning he had freed the soil-bound slaves
Who dig no land for tyrants but their graves !
Such is their cry—some watchword for the fight
Must vindicate the wrong, and warp the right :
Religion—freedom—vengeance—what you will,
A word's enough to raise mankind to kill ;
Some factious phrase by cunning caught and spread,
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed !

IX.

Throughout that clime the feudal chiefs had gained
Such sway, their infant monarch hardly reigned ;
Nor was the hour for faction's rebel growth,
The serfs contemned the one, and hated both :
They waited but a leader, and they found
One to their cause inseparably bound ;
By circumstance compelled to plunge again,
In self-defence, amidst the strife of men.
Cut off by some mysterious fate from those
Whom birth and nature meant not for his foes,
Had Lara from that night, to him accurst,
Prepared to meet, but not alone, the worst :
Some reason urged, whate'er it was, to shun
Enquiry into deeds at distance done ;
By mingling with his own the cause of all,
E'en if he failed, he still delayed his fall.
The sullen calm that long his bosom kept,
The storm that once had spent itself and slept,

Roused by events that seemed foredoomed to urge
His gloomy fortunes to their utmost verge,
Burst forth, and made him all he once had been,
And is again; he only changed the scene.
Light care had he for life, and less for fame,
But not less fitted for the desperate game:
He deemed himself marked out for other's hate,
And mocked at ruin so they shared his fate.
What cared he for the freedom of the crowd?
He raised the humble but to bend the proud.
He had hoped quiet in his sullen lair,
But man and destiny beset him there:
Inured to hunters he was found at bay,
And they must kill, they cannot snare the prey.
Stern, unambitious, silent, he had been
Henceforth a calm spectator of life's scene;
But dragged again upon the arena, stood
A leader not unequal to the feud;
In voice—mien—gesture—savage nature spoke,
And from his eye the gladiator broke.

X.

What boots the oft-repeated tale of strife,
The feast of vultures, and the waste of life?
The varying fortune of each separate field,
The fierce that vanquish, and the faint that yield?
The smoking ruin, and the crumbled wall?
In this the struggle was the same with all;
Save that distempered passions lent their force
In bitterness that banished all remorse.
None sued, for Mercy knew her cry was vain,
The captive died upon the battle-slain:
In either cause, one rage alone possest
The empire of the alternate victor's breast;

And they that smote for freedom or for sway,
Deemed few were slain, while more remained to slay.
It was too late to check the wasting brand,
And desolation reaped the famished land ;
The torch was lighted, and the flame was spread,
And carnage smiled upon her daily dead.

XI.

Fresh with the nerve the new-born impulse strung,
The first success to Lara's numbers clung :
But that vain victory hath ruined all,
They form no longer to their leader's call ;
In blind confusion on the foe they press,
And think to snatch is to secure success.
The lust of booty, and the thirst of hate,
Lure on the broken brigands to their fate ;
In vain he doth whate'er a chief may do,
To check the headlong fury of that crew ;
In vain their stubborn ardour he would tame,
The hand that kindles cannot quench the flame ;
The wary foe alone hath turned their mood,
And shown their rashness to that erring brood :
The feigned retreat, the nightly ambuscade,
The daily harass, and the fight delayed,
The long privation of the hoped supply,
The tentless rest beneath the humid sky,
The stubborn wall that mocks the leaguer's art,
And palls the patience of his baffled heart,
Of these they had not deemed : the battle-day
They could encounter as a veteran may ;
But more preferred the fury of the strife,
And present death to hourly suffering life :
And famine wrings, and fever sweeps away
His numbers melting fast from their array ;

Intemperate triumph fades to discontent,
And Lara's soul alone seems still unbent :
But few remain to aid his voice and hand,
And thousands dwindled to a scanty band:
Desperate, though few, the last and best remained
To mourn the discipline they late disdained.
One hope survives, the frontier is not far,
And thence they may escape from native war ;
And bear within them to the neighbouring state
An exile's sorrows, or an outlaw's hate:
Hard is the task their father land to quit,
But harder still to perish or submit.

XII.

It is resolved—they march—consenting Night
Guides with her star their dim and torchless flight ;
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream ;
Already they descry—Is yon the bank ?
Away ! 'tis lined with many a hostile rank.
Return or fly!—What glitters in the rear ?
'Tis Otho's banner—the pursuer's spear !
Are those the shepherd's fires upon the height ?
Alas ! they blaze too widely for the flight ;
Cut off from hope, and compassed in the toil,
Less blood perchance hath bought a richer spoil !

XIII.

A moment's pause, 'tis but to breathe their band,
Or shall they onward press, or here withstand ?
It matters little—if they charge the foes
Who by the border-stream their march oppose,

Some few, perchance, may break and pass the line,
However linked to baffle such design.

« The charge be ours! to wait for their assault

« Were fate well worthy of a coward's halt. »

Forth flies each sabre, reined is every steed,
And the next word shall scarce outstrip the deed:

In the next tone of Lara's gathering breath

How many shall but hear the voice of death!

XIV.

His blade is bared, in him there is an air

As deep, but far too tranquil for despair;

A something of indifference more than then

Becomes the bravest, if they feel for men—

He turned his eye on Kaled, ever near,

And still too faithful to betray one fear;

Perchance 'twas but the moon's dim twilight threw

Along his aspect an unwonted hue

Of mournful paleness, whose deep tint exprest

The truth, and not the terror of his breast.

This Lara marked, and laid his hand on his:

It trembled not in such an hour as this;

His lip was silent, scarcely beat his heart,

His eye alone proclaimed, « We will not part!

« Thy band may perish, or thy friends may flee,

« Farewell to life, but not adieu to thee! »

The word hath passed his lips, and onward driven,

Pours the linked band through ranks asunder riven

Well has each steed obeyed the armed heel,

And flash the scimitars, and rings the steel;

Outnumbered not outbraved, they still oppose

Despair to daring, and a front to foes;

And blood is mingled with the dashing stream,
Which runs all redly till the morning beam.

XV.

Commanding, aiding, animating all,
Where foe appeared to press, or friend to fall,
Cheers Lara's voice, and waves or strikes his steel,
Inspiring hope, himself had ceased to feel.
None fled, for well they knew that flight were vain,
But those that waver turn to smite again,
While yet they find the firmest of the foe
Recoil before their leader's look and blow:
Now girt with numbers, now almost alone,
He foils their ranks, or reunites his own;
Himself he spared not—once they seemed to fly—
Now was the time, he waved his hand on high,
And shook—why sudden droops that plumed crest?
The shaft is sped—the arrow's in his breast!
That fatal gesture left the unguarded side,
And Death hath stricken down yon arm of pride:
The word of triumph fainted from his tongue;
That hand, so raised, how droopingly it hung!
But yet the sword instinctively retains,
Though from its fellow shrink the falling reins,
These Kaled snatches: dizzy with the blow,
And senseless bending o'er his saddle-bow,
Perceives not Lara that his anxious page
Beguiles his charger from the combat's rage:
Meantime his followers charge, and charge again;
Too mixed the slayers now to heed the slain!

XVI.

Day glimmers on the dying and the dead,
The cloven cuirass, and the helmless head;

The war-horse masterless is on the earth,
And that last gasp hath burst his bloody girth;
And near yet quivering with what life remained,
The heel that urged him and the hand that reined;
And some too near that rolling torrent lie,
Whose waters mock the lip of those that die;
That panting thirst which scorches in the breath
Of those that die the soldier's fiery death,
In vain impels the burning mouth to crave
One drop—the last—to cool it for the grave;
With feeble and convulsive effort swept,
Their limbs along the crimsoned turf have crept;
The faint remains of life such struggles waste,
But yet they reach the stream, and bend to taste:
They feel its freshness, and almost partake—
Why pause? No further thirst have they to slake—
It is unquenched, and yet they feel it not;
It was an agony—but now forgot!

XVII.

Beneath a lime, remoter from the scene,
Where but for him that strife had never been,
A breathing but devoted warrior lay:
'Twas Lara bleeding fast from life away.
His follower once, and now his only guide,
Kneels Kaled watchful o'er his swelling side,
And with his scarf would staunch the tides that rush,
With each convulsion, in a blacker gush;
And then, as his faint breathing waxes low,
In feebler, not less fatal tricklings flow:
He scarce can speak, but motions him 'tis vain,
And merely adds another throb to pain.
He clasps the hand that pang which would assuage,
And sadly smiles his thanks to that dark page

Who nothing fears, nor feels, nor heeds, nor sees,
Save that damp brow which rests upon his knees ;
Save that pale aspect, where the eye, though dim,
Held all the light that shone on earth for him.

XVIII.

The foe arrives, who long had searched the field,
Their triumph nought till Lara too should yield ;
They would remove him, but they see 'twere vain,
And he regards them with a calm disdain,
That rose to reconcile him with his fate,
And that escape to death from living hate :
And Otho comes, and leaping from his steed,
Looks on the bleeding foe that made him bleed,
And questions of his state ; he answers not,
Scarce glances on him as on one forgot,
And turns to Kaled :—each remaining word,
They understood not, if distinctly heard ;
His dying tones are in that other tongue,
To which some strange remembrance wildly clung.
They spake of other scenes, but what—is known
To Kaled, whom their meaning reached alone ;
And he replied, though faintly, to their sound,
While gazed the rest in dumb amazement round :
They seemed even then—that twain—unto the last
To half forget the present in the past ;
To share between themselves some separate fate,
Whose darkness none beside should penetrate.

XIX.

Their words though faint were many—from the tone
Their import those who heard could judge alone ;
From this, you might have deemed young Kaled's death
More near than Lara's by his voice and breath,

So sad, so deep, and hesitating broke
The accents his scarce-moving pale lips spoke ;
But Lara's voice though low, at first was clear
And calm, till murmuring death gasped hoarsely near :
But from his visage little could we guess,
So unrepentant, dark, and passionless,
Save that when struggling nearer to his last,
Upon that page his eye was kindly cast ;
And once as Kaled's answering accents ceast,
Rose Lara's hand, and pointed to the East :
Whether (as then the breaking sun from high
Rolled back the clouds) the morrow caught his eye,
Or that'twas chance, or some remembered scene
That raised his arm to point where such had been
Scarce Kaled seemed to know, but turned away,
As if his heart abhorred that coming day.
And shrunk his glance before that morning light,
To look on Lara's brow—where all grew night.
Yet sense seemed left, though better were its loss ;
For when one near displayed the absolving cross,
And proffered to his touch the holy bead,
Of which his parting soul might own the need,
He looked upon it with an eye profane,
And smiled—Heaven pardon ! if 'twere with disdain :
And Kaled, though he spoke not, nor withdrew
From Lara's face his fixed despairing view,
With brow repulsive, and with gesture swift,
Flung back the hand which held the sacred gift,
As if such but disturbed the expiring man,
Nor seemed to know his life but *then* began,
That life of Immortality, secure
To none, save them whose faith in Christ is sure.

XX.

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew;
His limbs stretched fluttering, and his head drooped o'er
The weak yet still untiring knee that bore;
He pressed the hand he held upon his heart—
It beats no more, but Kaled will not part
With the cold grasp, but feels, and feels in vain,
For that faint throb which answers not again.
« It beats! »—Away, thou dreamer! he is gone—
It once was Lara which thou look'st upon.

XXI.

He gazed, as if not yet had passed away
The haughty spirit of that humble clay;
And those around have roused him from his trance,
But cannot tear from thence his fixed glance;
And when in raising him from where he bore
Within his arms the form that felt no more,
He saw the head his breast would still sustain,
Roll down like earth to earth upon the plain;
He did not dash himself thereby, nor tear
The glossy tendrils of his raven hair,
But strove to stand and gaze, but reeled and fell,
Scarce breathing more than that he loved so well.
Than that *he* loved! Oh! never yet beneath
The breast of man such trusty love may breathe!
That trying moment hath at once revealed
The secret long and yet but half concealed;
In baring to revive that lifeless breast,
Its grief seemed ended, but the sex confest;
And life returned, and Kaled felt no shame—
What now to her was Womanhood or Fame?

XXII.

And Lara sleeps not where his fathers sleep,
But where he died his grave was dug as deep,
Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
Though priest nor blessed, nor marble decked the mound;
And he was mourned by one whose quiet grief,
Less loud, outlasts a people's for their chief.
Vain was all question asked her of the past,
And vain e'en menace—silent to the last;
She told nor whence, nor why she left behind
Her all for one who seemed but little kind.
Why did she love him? Curious fool!—be still—
Is human love the growth of human will?
To her he might be gentleness; the stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern,
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow.
They were not common links, that formed the chain
That bound to Lara Kaled's heart and brain;
But that wild tale she brooked not to unfold,
And sealed is now each lip that could have told.

XXIII.

They laid him in the earth, and on his breast,
Besides the wound that sent his soul to rest,
They found the scattered dints of many a scar,
Which were not planted there in recent war;
Where'er had passed his summer years of life,
It seems they vanished in a land of strife;
But all unknown his glory or his guilt,
These only told that somewhere blood was spilt,
And Ezzelin, who might have spoke the past,
Returned no more—that night appeared his last.

XXIV.

Upon that night (a peasant's is the tale)
A serf, that crossed the intervening vale,
When Cynthia's light almost gave way to morn,
And nearly veiled in mist her waning horn;
A serf, that rose betimes to thread the wood,
And hew the bough that bought his children's food,
Passed by the river that divides the plain
Of Otho's lands and Lara's broad domain:
He heard a tramp—a horse and horseman broke
From out the wood—before him was a cloak
Wrapt round some burthen at his saddle bow,
Bent was his head, and hidden was his brow.
Roused by the sudden sight at such a time,
And some foreboding that it might be crime,
Himself unheeded watched the stranger's course,
Who reached the river, bounded from his horse,
And lifting thence the burthen which he bore,
Heaved up the bank, and dashed it from the shore,
Then paused, and looked, and turned and seemed to watch,
And still another hurried glance would snatch,
And follow with his step the stream that flowed,
As if even yet too much its surface showed:
At once he started, stooped, around him strown
The winter floods had scattered heaps of stone;
Of these the heaviest thence he gathered there,
And slung them with a more than common care.
Meantime the serf had crept to where unseen
Himself might safely mark what this might mean;
He caught a glimpse, as of a floating breast,
And something glittered starlike on the vest,

But ere he well could mark the buoyant trunk,
A massy fragment smote it, and it sunk :
It rose again but indistinct to view,
And left the waters of a purple hue,
Then deeply disappeared : the horseman gazed
Till ebb'd the latest eddy it had raised ;
Then turning, vaulted on his pawing steed,
And instant spurred him into panting speed.
His face was masked—the features of the dead,
If dead it were, escaped the observer's dread ;
But if in sooth a star its bosom bore,
Such is the badge that knighthood ever wore,
And such 'tis known Sir Ezzelin had worn
Upon the night that led to such a morn.
If thus he perished, Heaven receive his soul !
His undiscovered limbs to Ocean roll ;
And charity upon the hope would dwell
It was not Lara's hand by which he fell.

XXV.

And Kaled—Lara—Ezzelin, are gone,
Alike without their monumental stone !
The first, all efforts vainly strove to wean
From lingering where her chieftain's blood had been ;
Grief had so tamed a spirit once too proud,
Her tears were few, her wailing never loud ;
But furious would you tear her from the spot
Where yet she scarce believed that he was not,
Her eye shot forth with all the living fire
That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire ;
But left to waste her weary moments there,
She talked all idly unto shapes of air,

Such as the busy brain of sorrow paints,
And woos to listen to her fond complaints :
And she would sit beneath the very tree
Where lay his drooping head upon her knee ;
And in that posture where she saw him fall,
His words, his looks, his dying grasp recall ;
And she had shorn, but saved her raven hair,
And oft would snatch it from her bosom there,
And fold, and press it gently to the ground,
As if she staunched anew some phantom's wound.
Herself would question , and for him reply ;
Then rising, start, and beckon him to fly
From some imagined spectre in pursuit ;
Then seat her down upon some linden's root,
And hide her visage with her meagre hand,
Or trace strange characters along the sand—
This could not last—she lies by him she loved ;
Her tale untold—her truth too dearly proved.

NOTE.

THE event in section 24, Canto 2d, was suggested by the description of the death or rather burial of the Duke of Gandia.

The most interesting and particular account of this mysterious event, is given by Burchard, and is in substance as follows: «On the eighth day of June, the cardinal of Valenza, and the duke of Gandia, sons of the pope, supped with their mother, Vanozza, near the church of *S. Pietro ad vincula*; several other persons being present at the entertainment. A late hour approaching, and the cardinal having reminded his brother, that it was time to return to the apostolic palace, they mounted their horses or mules, with only a few attendants, and proceeded together as far as the palace of cardinal Ascanio Sforza, when the duke informed the cardinal, that before he returned home, he had to pay a visit of pleasure. Dismissing therefore all his attendants, excepting his *staffiero*, or footman, and a person in a mask, who had paid him a visit whilst at supper, and who, during the space of a month, or thereabouts, previous to this time, had called upon him almost daily, at the apostolic palace, he took this person behind him on his mule, and proceeded to the street of the Jews, where he quitted his servant, directing him to remain there until a certain hour, when, if he did not return, he might repair to the palace. The duke then seated the person in the mask behind him, and rode, I know not whither; but in that night he was assassinated, and thrown into the river. The servant, after having been dismissed, was also assaulted and mortally wounded; and although he was attended with great care, yet such was his situation, that he could give no intelligible account of what had befallen his master. In the morning, the duke not having returned to the palace, his servants began to be alarmed; and one of them informed the pontiff of the evening excursion of his sons, and that the duke had not yet made his appearance. This gave the pope no small anxiety; but he conjectured that the duke had been attracted by some cour-

« tesan to pass the night with her, and not choosing to quit
« the house in open day, had waited till the following even-
« ing to return home. When, however, the evening ar-
« rived, and he found himself disappointed in his expecta-
« tions, he became deeply afflicted, and began to make in-
« quiries from different persons, whom he ordered to attend
« him for that purpose. Amongst these was a man named
« Giorgio Schiavoni, who; having discharged some timber
« from a bark in the river, had remained on board the
« vessel to watch it, and being interrogated whether he
« had seen any one thrown into the river, on the night
« preceding, he replied, that he saw two men on foot, who
« came down the street, and looked diligently about, to
« observe whether any person was passing; that seeing no
« one, they returned, and a short time afterwards two
« others came, and looked around in the same manner as
« the former; no person still appearing, they gave a sign to
« their companions, when a man came, mounted on a white
« horse, having behind him a dead body, the head and arms
« of which hung on one side, and the feet on the other
« side of the horse; the two persons on foot supporting
« the body, to prevent its falling. They thus proceeded
« towards that part, where the filth of the city is usually
« discharged into the river, and turning the horse with his
« tail towards the water, the two persons took the dead
« body by the arms and feet, and with all their strength
« flung it into the river. The person on horseback then
« asked if they had thrown it in, to which they replied,
« *Signor, si*, (yes, Sir,). He then looked towards the river,
« and seeing a mantle floating on the stream, he inquired
« what it was that appeared black, to which they answered,
« it was a mantle; and one of them threw stones upon it,
« in consequence of which it sunk. The attendants of the
« pontiff then inquired from Giorgio, why he had not re-
« vealed this to the governor of the city; to which he replied,
« that he had seen in his time a hundred dead bodies
« thrown into the river at the same place, without any in-
« quiry being made respecting them, and that he had not,
« therefore, considered it as a matter of any importance.

« The fishermen and seamen were then collected and order-
« ed to search the river, where, on the following evening,
« they found the body of the duke, with his habit entire,
« and thirty ducats in his purse. He was pierced with nine
« wounds, one of which was in his throat, the others in
« his head, body and limbs. No sooner was the pontiff in-
« formed of the death of his son, and that he had been thrown,
« like filth, into the river, than giving way to his grief, he
« shut himself up in a chamber and wept bitterly. The car-
« dinal of Segovia, and other attendants on the pope, went
« to the door, and after many hours spent in persuasions
« and exhortations, prevailed upon him to admit them.
« From the evening of wednesday, till the following sa-
« turday, the pope took no food; nor did he sleep from
« thursday morning till the same hour on the ensuing day.
« At length, however, giving way to the intreaties of his
« attendants, he began to restrain his sorrow, and to con-
« sider the injury which his own health might sustain by
« the further indulgence of his grief. »—*Roscoe's Leo*
Tenth, Vol. I, page 265.

GEORGE HERDMORE DAVIES, Esq.

THE FOLLOWING POEM

PARISINA.

Jan. 22, 1846.

PARISINA.

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's « Antiquities of the House of Bruns-
wick »—I am aware that in modern times the delicacy
or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects

TO
SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, Esq.

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS INSCRIBED

BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIRIED HIS TALENTS

AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP.

Jan. 22, 1816.

vol. 3d, p. 470, new edition.

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's « Antiquities of the House of Brunswick. »—I am aware, that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion : as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of *Azo* is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical.

« Under the reign of Nicholas III, Ferrara was polluted
« with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an at-
« tendant, and his own observation, the Marquis of Este
« discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Parisina,
« and Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and valiant
« youth. They were beheaded in the castle by the sen-
« tence of a father and husband, who published his shame,
« and survived their execution. He was unfortunate, if
« they were guilty; if they were innocent, he was still
« more unfortunate; nor is there any possible situation
« in which I can sincerely approve the last act of the
« justice of a parent. »—*Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*,
vol. 3d, p. 470, new edition.

PARISINA.

I.

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word;
And gentle winds, and waters near,
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue,
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.¹

II.

But it is not to list to the waterfall
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the lady walks in the shadow of night;
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower—

She listens—but not for the nightingale—
 Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
 There glides a step through the foliage thick,
 And her cheek grows pale—and her heart beats quick.
 There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,
 And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves :
 A moment more—and they shall meet—
 'Tis past—her lover's at her feet.

III.

And what unto them is the world beside
 With all its change of time and tide ?
 Its living things—its earth and sky—
 Are nothing to their mind and eye.
 And heedless as the dead are they
 Of aught around, above, beneath ;
 As if all else had passed away,
 They only for each other breathe ;
 Their very sighs are full of joy
 So deep, that did it not decay,
 That happy madness would destroy
 The hearts which feel its fiery sway :
 Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
 In that tumultuous tender dream ?
 Who that have felt that passion's power,
 Or paused, or feared in such an hour ?
 Or thought how brief such moments last :
 But yet—they are already past !
 Alas ! we must awake before
 We know such vision comes no more.

IV.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past;
And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh—the long embrace—
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face
The Heaven she fears will not forgive her,
As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar—
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting-place.
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V.

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed,
To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fevered in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled dreams,
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her Lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away:
And he to that embrace awakes,
And, happy in the thought, mistakes.

That dreaming sigh, and warm caress,
For such as he was wont to bless;
And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep.

VI.

He clasped her sleeping to his heart,
And listened to each broken word:
He hears—Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?
And well he may—a deeper doom
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,
When he shall wake to sleep no more,
And stand the eternal throne before.
And well he may—his earthly peace
Upon that sound is doomed to cease.
That sleeping whisper of a name
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.
And whose that name? that o'er his pillow
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,
Which rolls the plank upon the shore,
And dashes on the pointed rock
The wretch who sinks to rise no more,—
So came upon his soul the shock.
And whose that name?'tis Hugo's,—his—
In sooth he had not deemed of this!—
'Tis Hugo's,—he, the child of one
He loved—his own all-evil son—
The offspring of his wayward youth,
When he betrayed Bianca's truth,
The maid whose folly could confide
In him who made her not his bride.

VII.

He plucked his poignard in its sheath,
But sheathed it ere the point was bare—
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair—
At least, not smiling—sleeping—there—
Nay, more :—he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance
Which, had she roused her from her trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again—
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleamed on the dew-drops big and damp.
She spake no more—but still she slumbered—
While, in his thought, her days are numbered.

VIII.

And with the morn he sought, and found,
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he feared to know,
Their present guilt, his future woe;
The long-conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would transfer
The guilt—the shame—the doom—to her :
Concealment is no more—they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell :
And Azo's tortured heart and ear
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

IX.

He was not one that brooked delay :
Within the chamber of his state,
The chief of Este's ancient sway
Upon his throne of judgment sate ;

His nobles and his guards are there,—
 Before him is the sinful pair ;
 Both young,—and *one* how passing fair !
 With swordless belt, and fettered hand,
 Oh, Christ ! that thus a son should stand
 Before a father's face !

Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
 And hear the sentence of his ire,
 The tale of his disgrace !

And yet he seems not overcome,
 Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

X.

And still, and pale, and silently
 Did Parisina wait her doom ;
 How changed since last her speaking eye
 Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
 Where high-born men were proud to wait—
 Where Beauty watched to imitate
 Her gentle voice—her lovely mien—
 And gather from her air and gait

The graces of its queen :
 Then,—had her eye in sorrow wept,
 A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
 A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
 And made her quarrel all their own.
 Now,—what is she ? and what are they ?
 Can she command, or these obey ?
 All silent and unheeding now,
 With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
 And folded arms, and freezing air,
 And lips that scarce their scorn forbear,
 Her knights and dames, her court—is there :
 And he, the chosen one, whose lance

Had yet been couched before her glance,
 Who—were his arm a moment free—
 Had died or gained her liberty;
 The minion of his father's bride,—
 He, too, is fettered by her side;
 Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
 Less for her own despair than him:
 Those lids o'er which the violet vein—
 Wandering, leaves a tender stain,
 Shining through the smoothest white
 That e'er did softest kiss invite—
 Now seemed with hot and livid glow
 To press, not shade, the orbs below;
 Which glance so heavily, and fill,
 As tear on tear grows gathering still.

XI.

And he for her had also wept,
 But for the eyes that on him gazed:
 His sorrow, if he felt it, slept;
 Stern and erect his brow was raised.
 Whate'er the grief his soul avowed,
 He would not shrink before the crowd;
 But yet he dared not look on her:
 Remembrance of the hours that were—
 His guilt—his love—his present state—
 His father's wrath—all good men's hate—
 His earthly, his eternal fate—
 And hers,—oh, hers!—he dared not throw
 One look upon that deathlike brow!
 Else had his rising heart betrayed
 Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII.

And Azo spake :—« But yesterday
 « I gloried in a wife and son ;
 « That dream this morning passed away ;
 « Ere day declines, I shall have none.
 « My life must linger on alone ;
 « Well,—let that pass,—there breathes not one
 « Who would not do as I have done :
 « Those ties are broken—not by me ;
 « Let that too pass ;—the doom's prepared !
 « Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,
 « And then—thy crime's reward !
 « Away ! address thy prayers to Heaven,
 « Before its evening stars are met—
 « Learn if thou there canst be forgiven ;
 « Its mercy may absolve thee yet.
 « But here, upon the earth beneath,
 « There is no spot where thou and I
 « Together, for an hour, could breathe :
 « Farewell ! I will not see thee die—
 « But thou, frail thing ! shalt view his head—
 « Away ! I cannot speak the rest :
 « Go ! woman of the wanton breast ;
 « Not I, but thou his blood dost shed :
 « Go ! if that sight thou canst outlive,
 « And joy thee in the life I give. »

XIII.

And here stern Azo hid his face—
 For on his brow the swelling vein
 Throbb'd, as if back upon his brain
 The hot blood ebb'd and flow'd again ;

And therefore bowed he for a space,
And passed his shaking hand along
His eye, to veil it from the throng;
While Hugo raised his chained hands,
And for a brief delay demands
His father's ear: the silent sire
Forbids not what his words require.

« It is not that I dread the death—
« For thou hast seen me by thy side
« All redly through the battle ride,
« And that not once a useless brand
« Thy slaves have wrested from my hand,
« Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,
« Than e'er can stain the axe of mine :
« Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my breath,
« A gift for which I thank thee not ;
« Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,
« Her slighted love and ruined name,
« Her offspring's heritage of shame ;
« But she is in the grave, where he,
« Her son, thy rival, soon shall be.
« Her broken heart—my severed head—
« Shall witness for thee from the dead
« How trusty and how tender were
« Thy youthful love—paternal care.
« 'Tis true, that I have done thee wrong—
« But wrong for wrong—this deemed thy bride,
« The other victim of thy pride,
« Thou know'st for me was destined long.
« Thou saw'st, and coveted'st her charms—
« And with thy very crime, my birth,
« Thou taunted'st me—as little worth ;

« A match ignoble for her arms,
« Because, forsooth, I could not claim
« The lawful heirship of thy name,
« Nor sit on Este's lineal throne :
« Yet, were a few short summers mine,
« My name should more than Este's shine
« With honours all my own.
« I had a sword—and have a breast
« That should have won as haught² a crest
« As ever waved along the line
« Of all these sovereign sires of thine.
« Not always knightly spurs are worn
« The brightest of the better born ;
« And mine have lanced my courser's flank
« Before proud chiefs of princely rank,
« When charging to the cheering cry
« Of ' Este and of Victory !'
« I will not plead the cause of crime,
« Not sue thee to redeem from time
« A few brief hours or days that must
« At length roll o'er my reckless dust ;—
« Such maddening moments as my past ;
« They could not, and they did not, last—
« Albeit my birth and name be base,
« And thy nobility of race
« Disdained to deck a thing like me—
« Yet in my lineaments they trace
« Some features of my father's face,
« And in my spirit—all of thee.
« From thee—this tamelessness of heart—
« From thee—nay, wherefore dost thou start ?—
« From thee in all their vigour came
« My arm of strength ; my soul of flame—

« Thou didst not give me life alone,
 « But all that made me more thine own.
 « See what thy guilty love hath done !
 « Repaid thee with too like a son !
 « I am no bastard in my soul;
 « For that, like thine, abhorred controul :
 « And for my breath, that hasty boon
 « Thou gav'st and wilt resume so soon,
 « I valued it no more than thou,
 « When rose thy casque above thy brow,
 « And we, all side by side, have striven,
 « And o'er the dead our coursers driven :
 « The past is nothing—and at last
 « The future can but be the past ;
 « Yet would I that I then had died :
 « For though thou work'dst my mother's ill,
 « And made thy own my destined bride,
 « I feel thou art my father still ;
 « And, harsh as sounds thy hard decree,
 « 'Tis not unjust, although from thee.
 « Begot in sin, to die in shame,
 « My life begun and ends the same :
 « As erred the sire, so erred the son,
 « And thou must punish both in one.
 « My crime seems worst to human view,
 « But God must judge between us too ! »

XIV.

He ceased—and stood with folded arms,
 On which the circling fetters sounded ;
 And not an ear but felt as wounded,
 Of all the chiefs that there were ranked,
 When those dull chains in meeting clanked :
 Till Parisina's fatal charms

Again attracted every eye—
Would she thus hear him doomed to die !
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo's ill :
Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turned to either side—
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close,
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose,
But round their orbs of deepest blue
The circling white dilated grew—
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood ;
But every now and then a tear
 So large and slowly gathered slid
 From the long dark fringe of that fair lid,
It was a thing to see, not hear !
And those who saw, it did surprise,
Such drops could fall from human eyes.
To speak she thought—the imperfect note
Was choked within her swelling throat,
Yet seemed in that low hollow groan
Her whole heart gushing in the tone.
It ceased—again she thought to speak,
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
And to the earth she fell like stone
Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
More like a thing that ne'er had life,—
A monument of Azo's wife,—
Than her, that living guilty thing,
Whose every passion was a sting,
Which urged to guilt, but could not bear
That guilt's detection and despair.
But yet she lived—and all too soon
Recovered from that death-like swoon—

But scarce to reason—every sense
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense ;
And each frail fibre of her brain
(As bow-strings, when relaxed by rain,
The erring arrow launch aside)
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide—
The past a blank, the future black,
With glimpses of a dreary track,
Like lightning on the desert path,
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.
She feared—she felt that something ill
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill—
That there was sin and shame she knew ;
That some one was to die—but who ?
She had forgotten :—did she breathe ?
Could this be still the earth beneath ?
The sky above, and men around ;
Or were they fiends who now so frowned
On one, before whose eyes each eye
Till then had smiled in sympathy ?
All was confused and undefined,
To her all-jarred and wandering mind ;
A chaos of wild hopes and fears :
And now in laughter, now in tears,
But madly still in each extreme,
She strove with that convulsive dream ;
For so it seemed on her to break :
Oh ! vainly must she strive to wake !

XV.

The Convent bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow ;
In the grey square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.

Heavily to the heart they go !

Hark ! the hymn is singing—

The song for the dead below,

Or the living who shortly shall be so !

For a departing being's soul

The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells knoll :

He is near his mortal goal ;

Kneeling at the Friars's knee ;

Sad to hear—and piteous to see—

Kneeling on the bare cold ground,

With the block before and the guards around—

And the headsman with his bare arm ready,

That the blow may be both swift and steady,

Feels if the axe be sharp and true—

Since he set its edge anew :

While the crowd in a speechless circle gather

To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father.

XVI.

It is a lovely hour as yet

Before the summer sun shall set,

Which rose upon that heavy day,

And mocked it with his steadiest ray ;

And his evening beams are shed

Full on Hugo's fated head,

As his last confession pouring

To the monk, his doom deploring

In penitential holiness,

He bends to hear his accents bless

With absolution such as may

Wipe our mortal stains away.

That high sun on his head did glisten

As he there did bow and listen—

And the rings of chesnut hair
Curled half down his neck so bare;
But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter—
Oh ! that parting hour was bitter !
Even the stern stood chilled with awe :
Dark the crime, and just the law—
Yet they shuddered as they saw.

XVII.

The parting prayers are said and over
Of that false son—and daring lover !
His beads and sins were all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted—
His mantling cloak before was stripped,
His bright brown locks must now be clipped,
'Tis done—all closely are they shorn—
The vest which till this moment worn—
The scarf which Parisina gave—
Must not adorn him to the grave.
Even that must now be thrown aside,
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied;
But no—that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renewed,
When headsman's hands prepared to bind
Those eyes which would not brook such blind :
As if they dared not look on death.
« No—yours my forfeit blood and breath—
« These hands are chained—but let me die
« At least with an unshackled eye—

« Strike : »—and as the word he said,
Upon the block he bowed his head ;
These the last accents Hugo spoke :
« Strike »—and flashing fell the stroke—
Rolled the head—and, gushing, sunk
Back the stained and heaving trunk,
In the dust, which each deep vein
Slaked with its ensanguined rain ;
His eyes and lips a moment quiver,
Convulsed and quick—then fix for ever.

He died, as erring man should die,
Without display, without parade :
Meekly had he bowed and prayed,
As not disdaining priestly aid,
Nor desperate of all hope on high.
And while before the Prior kneeling,
His heart was weaned from earthly feeling ;
His wrathful sire—his paramour—
What were they in such an hour ?
No more reproach—no more despair ;
No thought but heaven—no word but prayer—
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headsman's stroke,
He claimed to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around.

XVIII.

Still as the lips that closed in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath :
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran,
As down the deadly blow descended
On him whose life and love thus ended ;

And with a hushing sound comprest,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,
Beyond the blow that to the block
Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,
Save one:—what cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill—so passing wild?
That, as a mother's o'er her child,
Done to death by sudden blow,
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe.
Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,
That horrid voice ascends to heaven,
And every eye is turned thereon;
But sound and sight alike are gone!
It was a woman's shriek—and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it past,
In mercy wished it were the last.

XIX.

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen:
Her name—as if she ne'er had been—
Was banished from each lip and ear,
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb—no memory had they;
Theirs was unconsecrated clay;
At least the knight's who died that day.
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:

Whether in convent she abode,
 And won to heaven her dreary road,
 By blighted and remorseful years
 Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;
 Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
 For that dark love she dared to feel;
 Or if, upon the moment smote,
 She died by tortures less remote;
 Like him she saw upon the block,
 With heart that shared the headsman's shock,
 In quickened brokenness that came,
 In pity, o'er her shattered frame,
 None knew—and none can ever know:
 But whatsoe'er its end below,
 Her life began and closed in woe!

XX.

And Azo found another bride,
 And goodly sons grew by his side;
 But none so lovely and so brave
 As him who withered in the grave;
 Or if they were—on his cold eye
 Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
 Or noticed with a smothered sigh.
 But never tear his cheek descended,
 And never smile his brow unbended;
 And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
 The intersected lines of thought;
 Those furrows which the burning share
 Of sorrow ploughs untimely there;
 Scars of the lacerating mind
 Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
 He was past all mirth or woe:
 Nothing more remained below

But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunned itself—and yet
That would not yield—nor could forget,
Which when it least appeared to melt,
Intently thought—intensely felt :
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close—
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows—and cannot cease to flow.
Still was his sealed-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted ;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish ;
When, struggling as they rise to start,
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried—those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure,
Unseen, unwept, but uncongealed,
And cherished most where least revealed.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft ;
Without the power to fill again
The desert gap which made his pain ;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share,
With all the consciousness that he
Had only passed a just decree ;
That they had wrought their doom of ill,
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
If lopped with care, a strength may give,

By which the rest shall bloom and live
 All greenly fresh and wildly free :
 But if the lightning, in its wrath,
 The waving boughs with fury scathe,
 The massy trunk the ruin feels,
 And never more a leaf reveals.

NOTES TO PARISINA.

Note 1, page 183, line 14.

As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

The lines contained in Section I. were printed as set to music some time since : but belonged to the poem where they now appear, the greater part of which was composed prior to « Lara » and other compositions since published.

Note 2, page 192, line 9.

That should have won as haught a crest.

Haught—haughty—

« Away *haught* man ! thou art insulting me. »

Shakespeare, Richard II.

ODE

NAPOLÉON BUONAPARTE

ODE

TO

NAPOLÉON BUONAPARTE.

« Expende Annibalem :—quot libras in duce summo

« Invenies ?——— »

JUVENAL, Sat. X.

ODE
« The Emperor Nepos was acknowledged by the *Senate*,
« by the *Italians*, and by the Provincials of *Gaul*; his moral
« virtues, and military talents, were loudly celebrated; and
« those who derived any private benefit from his government,
« announced in prophetic strains the restoration of public
« felicity.

* * * * *
* * * * *

« By this shameful abdication, he protracted his life a few
« years, in a very ambiguous state, between an Emperor
« and an Exile, till——

Gibbon's Decline and Fall, etc. vol. 6. p. 220.

ODE
TO
NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

I.

'Tis done—but yesterday a King !
And armed with King's to strive—
And now thou art a nameless thing
So abject—yet alive !
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strewed our Earth with hostile bones ?
And can he thus survive ?
Since he, miscalled the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fall'n so far.

II.

Ill-minded man ! why scourge thy kind
Who bowed so low the knee ?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestioned,—power to save—
Thine only gift hath been the grave
To those that worshipped thee ;
Nor, till thy fall, could mortals guess
Ambition's less than littleness !

III.

Thanks for that lesson—it will teach
To after-warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preached before.

That spell upon the minds of men
 Breaks never to unite again,
 That led them to adore
 Those Pagod things of sabre-sway,
 With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

IV.

The triumph, and the vanity,
 The rapture of the strife—
 The earthquake shout of Victory,
 To thee the breath of life ;
 The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
 Which man seemed made but to obey,
 Wherewith renown was rife—
 All quelled!—Dark Spirit! what must be
 The madness of thy memory !

V.

The Desolator desolate !
 The Victor overthrown !
 The Arbiter of others' fate
 A Suppliant for his own !
 Is it some yet imperial hope
 That with such change can calmly cope ?
 Or dread of death alone ?
 To die a prince—or live a slave—
 Thy choice is most ignobly brave !

VI.

He who of old would rend the oak,
 Dreamed not of the rebound ;
 Chained by the trunk he vainly broke,
 Alone—how looked he round ?—

Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed hast done at length,

And darker fate hast found :

He fell, the forest-prowlers' prey ;

But thou must eat thy heart away !

VII.

The Roman, when his burning heart

Was slaked with blood of Rome,

Threw down the dagger—dared depart,

In savage grandeur, home.

He dared depart, in utter scorn

Of men that such a yoke had borne,

Yet left him such a doom !

His only glory was that hour

Of self-upheld abandoned power.

VIII.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway

Had lost its quickening spell,

Cast crowns for rosaries away,

An empire for a cell ;

A strict accountant of his beads,

A subtle disputant on creeds,

His dotage trifled well :

Yet better had he neither known

A bigot's shrine , nor despot's throne.

IX.

But thou—from thy reluctant hand

The thunderbolt is wrung—

Too late thou leav'st the high command

To which thy weakness clung ;

All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart,
To see thine own unstrung ;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean.

X.

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
Who thus can hoard his own !
And Monarchs bowed the trembling limb,
And thanked him for a throne !
Fair Freedom ! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh ! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind !

XI.

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain—
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain.
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
To shame the world again—
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night ?

XII.

Weighed in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay ;
Thy scales , Mortality ! are just
To all that pass away ;

But yet methought, the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
To dazzle and dismay ;
Nor deemed Contempt could thus make mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

XIII.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
Thy still imperial bride ;
How bears her breast the torturing hour ?
Still clings she to thy side ?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
Thou throneless Homicide ?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,
'Tis worth thy vanished diadem !

XIV.

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
And gaze upon the sea ;
That element may meet thy smile,
It ne'er was ruled by thee !
Or trace with thine all idle hand,
In loitering mood, upon the sand,
That Earth is now as free !
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferred his by-word to thy brow.

XV.

Thou Timour ! in his captive's cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prisoned rage ?
But one—" The world *was* mine ? "

Unless, like he of Babylon,
 All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
 Life will not long confine
 That spirit poured so widely forth—
 So long obeyed—so little worth!

XVI.

Or like the thief of fire from heaven,
 Wilt thou withstand the shock?
 And share with him, the unforgiven,
 His vulture and his rock!
 Foredoomed by God—by man accurst,
 And that last act, though not thy worst,
 The very Fiend's arch mock;
 He in his fall preserved his pride,
 And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

XIX.

Then haste thee, thyself, to the sea,
 And gaze upon the sea;
 That element, man's empire,
 It never was ruled by him;
 Or trace with thine idle hand,
 In lottering moonlight, the sand,
 That Earth is ruled by thee;
 That Cornish's power is none;
 To see the world's power none.

XX.

Then Timon's his hissing
 What thought will there be
 While brooding in the
 But one—the world's

ODE
TO
VENICE.

I.

OH Venice ! Venice ! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea !
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
What should thy sons do ?—any thing but weep :
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers—as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam,
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were ; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
Oh ! agony—that centuries should reap
No mellowed harvest ! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears ;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets ;
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum,
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,
That heaved beneath the moon light with the throng
Of gondolas—and to the busy hum

Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
Whence Vice walks forth with their unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'ertortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;—
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirits soaring—albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek;
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what he clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him—and the dizzy
Chamber swims round and round—and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
And all is ice and blackness,—and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II.

There is no hope for nations!—Search the page
Of many thousand years—the daily scene,
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,
Hath taught us nought or little: still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order—they must go
Even where their driver goads them, though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the *real*;
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme!—Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!
Save the few spirits, who despite of all,
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd
By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains—when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain

Heavy and sore,—in which long yoked they plough'd
 The sand,—or if there sprung the yellow grain,
 'Twas not for them, their necks were too much bow'd,
 And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain :—
 Yes ! the few spirits—who, despite of deeds
 Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
 Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
 Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
 But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
 With all her seasons to repair the blight
 With a few summers, and again put forth
 Cities and generations—fair, when free—
 For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee !

III.

Glory and Empire ! once upon these towers
 With Freedom—godlike Triad ! how ye sate !
 The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
 When Venice was an envy, might abate,
 But did not quench, her spirit—in her fate
 All were enwrapp'd : the feasted monarchs knew
 And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
 Although they humbled—with the kingly few
 The many felt, for from all days and climes
 She was the voyager's worship ;—even her crimes
 Were of the softer order—born of Love,
 She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
 But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread ;
 For these restored the Cross, that from above
 Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
 Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
 Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
 The city it has clothed in chains, which clank

Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles ;
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,
And call'd the « kingdom » of a conquering foe,—
But knows what all—and, most of all, *we* know—
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles !

IV.

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe ;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe ;
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a time,
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing Ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd—a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science—
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic !—She has taught
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feeble crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Still, still, for ever
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,

That it should flow, and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces, and then faltering :—better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,
Than stagnate in our marsh,—or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the Ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

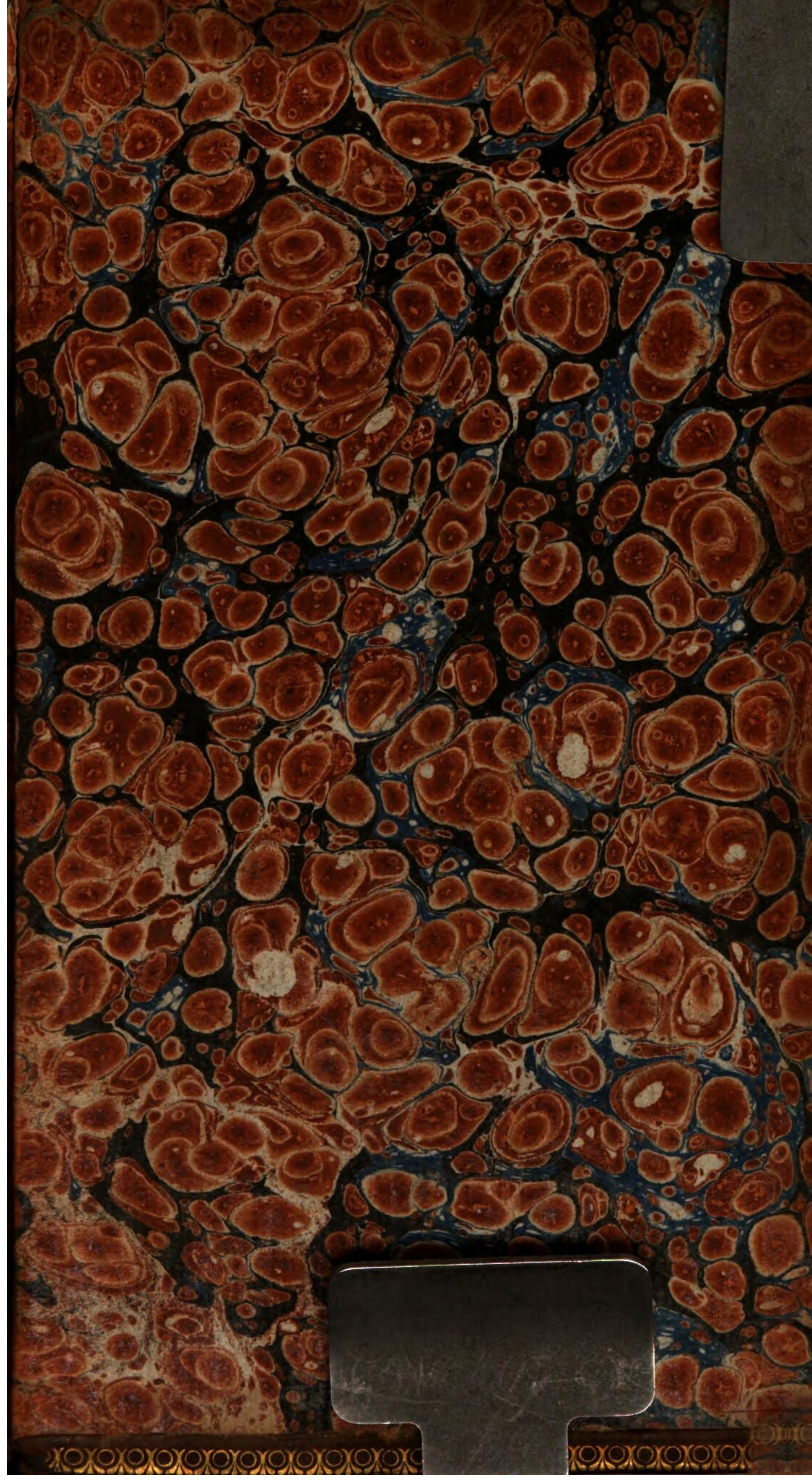
END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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Byron, George Gordon Byron

Lord Byron's works

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